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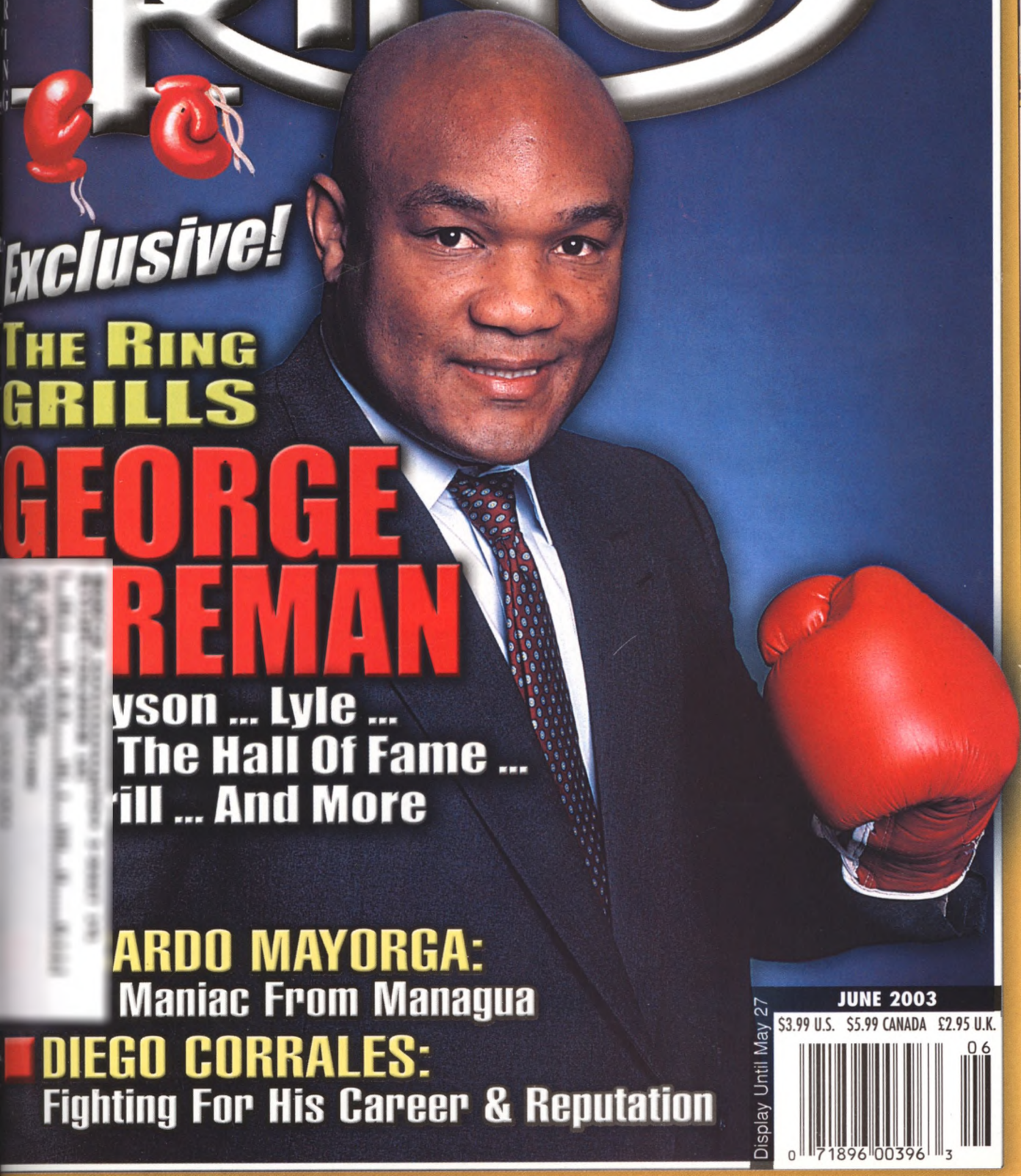

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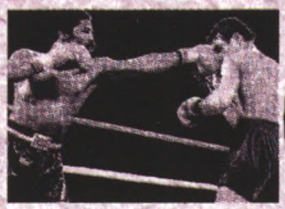

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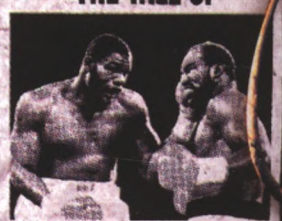

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THE TALE OF

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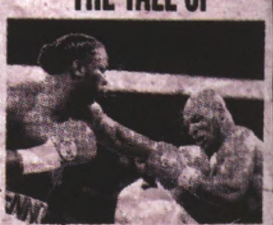

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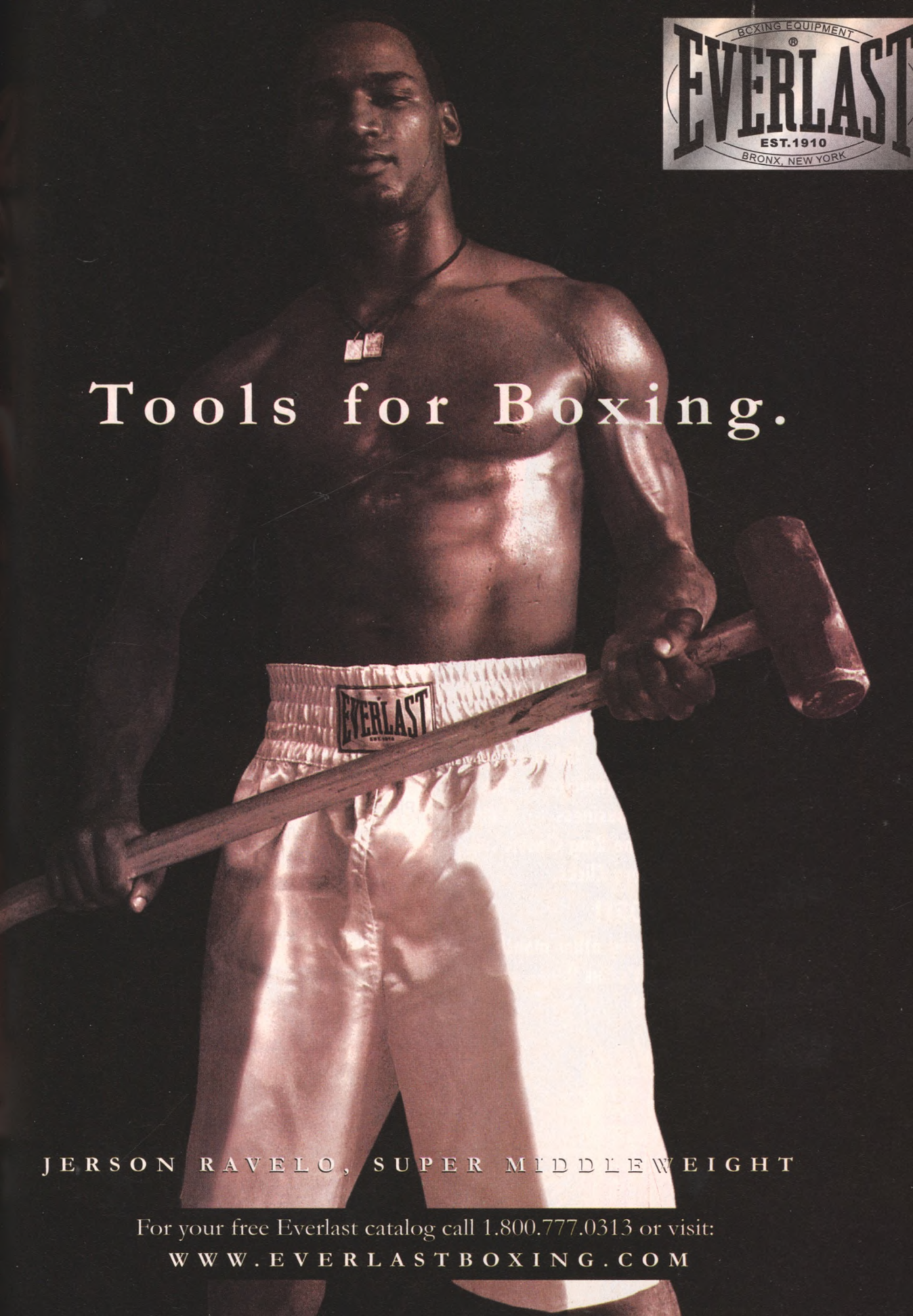
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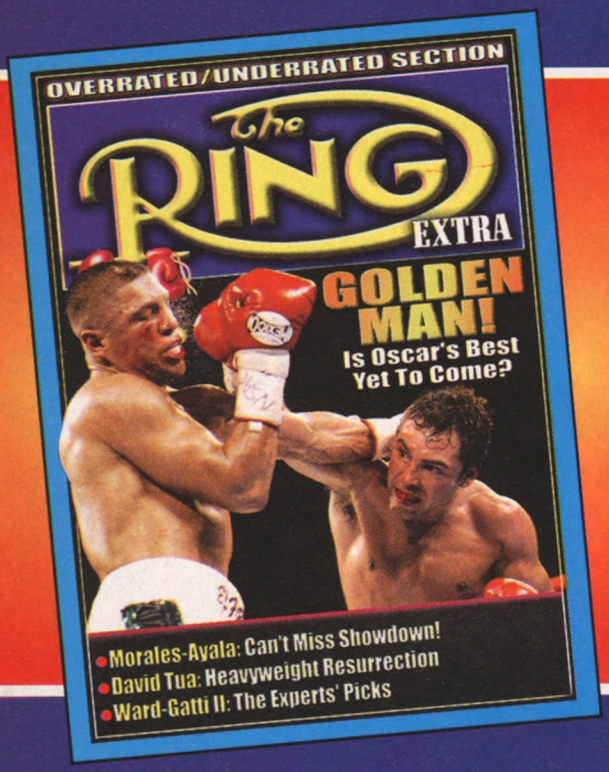

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RINGSIDE

Unlike the various alphabet organizations, THE RING does not strip champions for failing to defend against the number-one contender—or for any other reason. Although this stance is a fundamental component of our championship policy, it is also one of the most controversial and misunderstood. But the more you think about, the more it makes sense.

THE RING'S philosophy starts with the basic concept that titles should be won and lost in the ring. After all, that's what boxing is all about: two fighters settling the question of who's best in one-on-one competition, unfettered by outside influence. It's when you start to dicker with that elemental notion that things begin to go awry.

True, there are champions who duck worthy contenders, but stripping them of the titles they won in the ring is not the answer. In fact, such action almost invariably leads to problems far more serious than the one you started with. At the very least, instead of a legitimate champion on the throne, there's a guy wearing a paper crown. That might be good for him, but it's not good for the sport.

It's one of those situations where the so-called cure is worse than the disease. Stripping titles is a short-term solution at best. We have to keep the big picture in mind, and never forget that split titles and watered-down championships are two of the chief causes of boxing's current status as a fringe sport. And that's not all.

The problem has now spread beyond stripping for not defending against whomever the alphabet group deems the top contenders. Now organizations are stripping title-holders because they challenge for another belt. Remember when Paulie Ayala and Bones Adams were *both* stripped of their WBA titles for fighting each other? More recently, the WBC threatened to take away Oscar Larios' super bantamweight title if he accepted a lucrative offer to fight world featherweight champion Marco Antonio Barrera.

So not only is this penchant for taking away titles eroding what's left of boxing's credibility, it's also preventing fans from seeing quality matches. And let's not forget that these self-serving cartels repeatedly create situations where unmarketable and undeserving fighters become mandatory challengers. A lot of Roy Jones' so-called mandatories have fallen into this category.

The ironic thing about the con that the alphabet gangs are perpetrating is that very few champions duck worthy challengers. Sure, it happens from time to time, but by and large, the champs are eager to prove themselves against the very best, and not just because it's the honorable thing to do. The way to make the most money is to make the matches the fans want to see. It is, therefore, public demand that provides the best method for persuading a reluctant champion to do the right thing.

The media can also play a positive role, and if one of THE RING champions abuses his position, we will be quick to criticize him in print. Granted, sometimes it takes a while for public pressure and the marketplace to bring about the desired outcome, but the end result is always preferable to the destructive practice of stripping.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that THE RING'S no-strip policy isn't intended to protect the champions; it's designed to protect the very concept of what a champion is, which is far more critical to the well-being of the Sweet Science than the individual needs of any boxer.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

Volume 82, No. 6 **June 2003**

The Ring

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"The Bible Of Boxing"

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Chip . . . Gerry Cooney (l) chips onto 18th green while Sir Henry Cooper (r) is enroute to next tee.

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Stars . . . Boxers and fans enjoy VIP reception while Angelo Dundee receives red carpet welcome.

WORKOUT SESSIONS

Christy Martin laces up her gloves and Bernard Hopkins hits the speed bag.

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Reminiscing. . . Alexis Arguello (L) reunites with Ruben Olivares (R).

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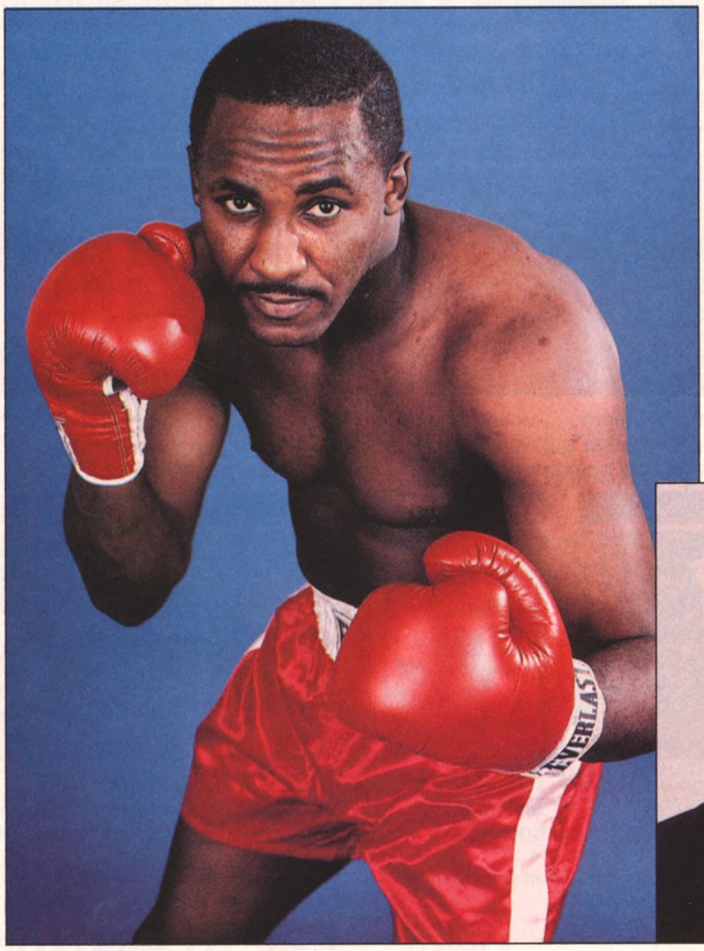
ROUND ONE

FOREMAN, 15 MORE MEN IN CLASS OF 2003

Not since Sugar Ray Leonard was enshrined in 1997 has the International Boxing Hall of Fame had a true superstar fighter to unofficially "headline" its induction weekend, but that will change this year. To the surprise of no one, two-time heavyweight champion and living legend **George Foreman** has been elected in his first year of eligibility *(see cover story, page 22)*, and there will probably be a bigger buzz and a larger crowd than usual descending upon Canastota, New York, as a result.

But Big George isn't the only one having his plaque added to the walls at the IBHOF this June. Among those joining Foreman is one other first-ballot selection, **Mike McCallum**, who held the WBA 154-pound title from 1984-'87, the WBA middleweight title from '89-'92, and the WBC light heavyweight title from '94-'95. Others in the Modern category include **Fred Apostoli**, who reigned as world middleweight champion from '37-'39; **Curtis Cokes**, who wore the world welterweight title belt from '66-'69; and **Nicolino Locche**, who held the world junior welterweight championship from '68-'72.



Mike McCallum

Four fighters have been elected in the Old-Timers category: featherweight champions **Battling Battalino** and **Louis "Kid" Kaplan**, and heavyweights **Tom Sharkey** and **Jess Willard**. English lightweight champion **Caleb Baldwin** and bare-knuckle heavyweight champion **Joe Goss** will be inducted in the Pioneer category, while promoter **Dan Duva**, booking agent **Dewey Fragetta**, and manager/matchmaker **Al Weill** are this year's Non-Participant honorees. Also, journalist **Jack Fiske** and author/screenwriter **Budd Schulberg** have been elected in the Observer category, and like fellow living inductees Foreman, McCallum, Cokes, and Locche, both are expected to attend Hall of Fame Weekend June 5-8.

Dan Duva

For more information on the IBHOF induction weekend, contact the Hall at (315) 697-7095.

—Eric Raskin

ANOTHER "LOCA" CHAPTER FOR TAPIA

Johnny Tapia has survived another brush with death.

Less than 48 hours after the popular featherweight was deemed "extremely critical" in a Las Vegas hospital and was breathing with the aid of a respirator, he made a remarkable recovery and was pronounced out of danger.

The latest saga in Tapia's incredible life story began on January 10 in Golden Valley, Arizona, a small town about 90 minutes from Las Vegas. Tapia, 35, was in a home in which police were seeking his cousin, Raymond Whiting, who was wanted on a warrant for failure to appear on aggravated assault and weapons charges in New Mexico. After a standoff, Tapia, Whiting, and another male occupant left the house peacefully. Tapia was cited for felony possession of drug paraphernalia, but was not arrested by Mohave County, Arizona, sheriffs.

His wife, Teresa, drove from Las Vegas to pick him up. She said he was depressed about what had occurred, but appeared fine. Around midnight that night, she said her husband fell backward and lapsed into unconsciousness. He was taken by ambulance to University Medical Center, where he was in extremely critical condition.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

The Tapias are struggling on

Las Vegas Metropolitan Police officers responded to Teresa Tapia's 911 call at 12:36 a.m. on January 11. They deemed it a medical emergency, summoned paramedics, and then did not file a report. The police have declined to release the 911 tape.

"His wife calls in and says supposedly that he's drunk," Lt. Patrick Charoen said.

A statement issued by the Tapia family on January 11 said he was being treated for head trauma. At noon on January 12, Tapia was upgraded from critical to serious. He had awakened from his coma at some point early that day and was talking to family members.

The next day, he was listed first in fair condition and then later was released. In an HBO *Real Sports* interview that aired four weeks later, Tapia said that soon after his release from the hospital, he admitted himself to a California rehab center to try to overcome his cocaine addiction.

"I don't get no more chances," Tapia said in the highly emotional interview. "Next time I die, I'm out. My nine lives are over ... I need the help. I want the help. I need to continue to be with my family. I'm trying ... I'll get there."

In a statement released by UMC, Dr. Joaquim Tavares said tests revealed no damage to Tapia's heart or brain, and that his boxing career has not been jeopardized.

"His brain scan was fine. The scan of his chest was fine," Teresa said. "We aren't thinking about his boxing career right now. Johnny still needs rest and time to recover."

Tapia's trainer, Freddie Roach, was in Las Vegas training Mike Tyson and went to see Tapia the day he was brought into the hospital. He was prepared for the worst and was startled after seeing him the following day.

"He was his old self when I saw him [on January 12]—though he was a little groggy from all the medication they were giving him," Roach said. "On Saturday night, he looked almost dead. They were saying it was 50-50. I've never seen anyone that comatose, which I guess is fortunate for me. His skin color was so bad, and he didn't respond no matter what they did, even when they were sticking him with needles. He didn't twitch or anything. He was like a corpse laying there. It really scared me. I can't believe the turnaround."

Tapia, who won major alphabet titles in two weight classes in compiling a 52-3-2 (28) record, had been suspended from boxing for three years from 1991 through 1993 because of his drug habit. For years he has spoken freely of his struggles in trying to stay sober. Tapia takes medication for bipolar affective disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Tapia was declared dead once, near death on at least three other occasions, and institutionalized twice after attempting suicide, most recently in Las Vegas in 2001.

—Kevin Iole

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
1-3-03	Lawrence Clay-Bey W 10 Charles Shufford	ESPN2	h	B-	B-	D-
Just in case you were feeling nostalgic for Tim Witherspoon-Tony Tubbs						
1-4-03	**Luis Perez W 12 Felix Machado**	**Show**	**IBF jb**	**A-**	**C+**	**A-**
Upset! Perez outbrawls Machado in a war; we'd love a rematch						
1-4-03	DeMarcus Corley W 12 Randall Bailey	Show	jw	A-	A	D
How could two top guys in such a great division produce such a yawner? They should be ashamed						
1-10-03	DaVarryl Williamson W 10 Robert Wiggins	ESPN2	h	C+	B+	B
This was as ugly as a heavyweight fight could get while still being moderately entertaining						
1-18-03	Muhammad Abdullaev KO 4 Phillip Holiday	Show	jw	B-	C+	B-
Abdullaev may have the heaviest right hand of anyone at 140—and that includes Tszyu and Gatti						
1-18-03	**Kostya Tszyu KO 6 Jesse James Leija**	**Show**	**World jw**	**A+**	**C**	**C+**
So do you think Leija picks the round he's going to quit in before the fight, or does he wait until it feels right?						
1-24-03	Julio Gonzalez W 10 Glencoffe Johnson	Telef	lh	B-	C+	B-
If you want to say Johnson was robbed, we won't argue with you						
1-25-03	Joel Casamayor W 10 Nate Campbell	HBO	l	B+	A	B+
Why all the hubbub about the scoring? Casamayor deserved it; get over it						
1-25-03	**Ricardo Mayorga KO 3 Vernon Forrest**	**HBO**	**World w**	**A+**	**B+**	**A**
Can someone please explain why Ronnie Shields was screaming at Forrest between rounds to back Mayorga up?						
1-25-03	Sharmba Mitchell KO 4 Carlos Vilches	Show	jw	A-	C+	B
Sharmba, stop obsessing already; the closest you'll get to Tszyu again is cracking open a Foster's						
1-31-03	Charles Brewer W 10 Etianne Whitaker	ESPN2	lh	B-	C	B+
Brewer will almost certainly never win a major title again, but as long as he keeps fighting like this, we'll keep watching						
2-1-03	Juan Diaz KO 7 John Bailey	Show	l	C+	C	C+
Give credit to Bailey, who was no doubt the toughest kid in the trailer park						
2-1-03	Francisco Bojado KO 10 Frankie Santos	Show	w	B-	C+	B-
Note to Floyd Mayweather Sr.: Some guys are punchers, not boxers; let the kid be a puncher						
2-1-03	Rocky Juarez KO 8 Jason Pires	Show	f	B-	B	B-
If this wasn't a fluke and Juarez has developed a punch, a lot of featherweights are in for a beating						
2-1-03	**Carlos Hernandez Tech. Win 8 David Santos**	**PPV**	**IBF jl**	**A-**	**B+**	**C+**
Whenever you think the fight game is dying, remember how important this fight was to an entire country						
2-1-03	Miguel Cotto KO 11 Cesar Bazan	PPV	jw	B	B+	B
Bazan not what he used to be, but this was impressive anyway; yes, Cotto's a future star						
2-1-03	**Juan Manuel Marquez KO 7 Manuel Medina**	**PPV**	**IBF f**	**A**	**A-**	**B**
If you think Johnny Tapia was depressed before ...						
2-7-03	Omar Weis W 10 Emanuel Augustus	ESPN2	jw	B-	B+	C
If Martin Short could hook off the jab and counterpunch the bejesus out of you, he'd be Weis						
2-7-03	Silverio Ortiz KO 7 Jorge Paez	Telef	l	C-	D+	C
Troy Dorsey: "Hit him on the break! Of course! Why didn't we think of that?"						
2-8-03	Antonio Margarito KO 2 Andrew Lewis	HBO	w	A-	A-	B
Andrew, Michael Moorer called; he wants his chin back						
2-8-03	Shane Mosley No-Contest 3 Raul Marquez	HBO	jm	A	C	D+
Is anyone else really tired of Mosley forcing that phony smile during tense postfight interviews?						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

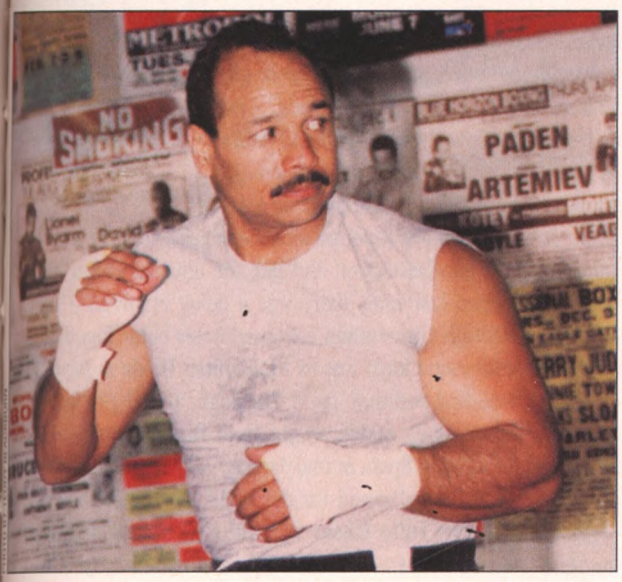
(World/Alphabet title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo

AYALA BEATS SEX CHARGE

Admit it. When Tony Ayala Jr. had his probation revoked in early-December 2002 for allegedly having sex with a 14-year-old girl, you thought we'd seen the last of the troubled Texan in a boxing ring. It was an easy assumption to make, considering Ayala's history as a sexual predator. But a surprising turn of events at his January hearing freed Ayala, who had been held at the Bexar County jail since December 5.



Ayala's free to fight

"You know the saying, 'The truth will set you free,'" said the 39-year-old Ayala upon his release. "This feels wonderful."

The district attorney's case began to fall apart when the girl took the witness stand. Under cross-examination, the eighth-grader from suburban San Antonio conceded that she had told several different versions of her story about sex with Ayala to different people. She also acknowledged that she had falsely accused her stepfather of sexually molesting her four years ago. At one point during her testimony, the judge asked her if she knew what perjury was, and when she said she didn't, the hearing was stopped.

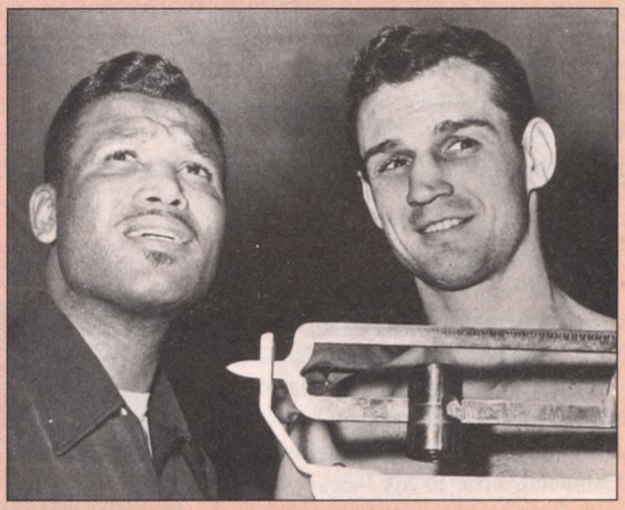
During court recess, the girl consulted an attorney, who advised her to not testify any further. This prompted Michael Bernard, Bexar County's first assistant prosecutor, to withdraw the motion to revoke Ayala's parole.

"We knew this case depended on this one witness," said Bernard. "Without her, there was nothing."

Ayala, 31-1 (27), intends to resume his boxing career as soon as a bout can be arranged.

PAUL PENDER, 1930-2003

Former middleweight champion Paul Pender, who died on January 12 at the age of 72 following a lengthy battle with Alzheimer's disease, was an early victim of the alphabet madness that currently permeates boxing. Although he won the linear title by outpointing a badly faded Sugar Ray Robinson in 1960, by May '63 Pender was out of boxing, disgusted by backroom politics and unable to obtain a lucrative bout despite the fact that he still had a legitimate claim to the title.



Pender with Robinson at weigh-in for title-winning bout

Part of Pender's problem was his inability to keep his mouth shut. He was a maverick at a time when most fighters, if they knew what was good for them, went along with the program. Pender was different, an outspoken critic of the game who not only ripped the people who controlled his destiny ("Boxing is rotten clear through and infested with gangsters"), but also the fans who didn't appreciate his safety-first boxing style ("They've become the most animalistic and cruel people in the world").

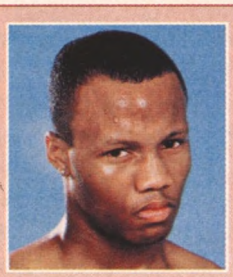
Pender, a native of Brookline, Massachusetts, turned pro in '49, but briefly retired and enlisted in the Marines during the Korean War. Hand problems that plagued him in the ring continued while he was in the service, leading to an early discharge and a resumption of his boxing career. He boxed sporadically during the early-'50s, but increased activity at the end of the decade led to a bout with the 38-year-old Robinson, who hadn't defended since regaining the title from Carmen Basilio in '58.

Beating Robinson did not win Pender universal recognition. Robinson had already been stripped by the National Boxing Association and the powerful New York State Athletic Commission, both of which recognized Gene Fullmer as champion at the time.

Pender made three successful defenses, lost the title to Terry Downes, regained it, and then called it quits with an overall record of 40-6-2 (20). Afterward, he worked as director of recreation at Norfolk State Prison and later became assistant athletic director at UMass-Boston.

—Nigel Collins

OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Judah: Back-to-back setbacks

And you thought the beating **Mike Tyson** took from **Lennox Lewis** was bad? Tyson's second wife, **Dr. Monica Turner**, really had her way with the ex-champ in their divorce proceedings in mid-January. Turner, who had accused Tyson of adultery when she filed for divorce in January 2002, was awarded $6.5-million from Tyson's future earnings, the couple's $4.75-million Connecticut mansion, and their $4-million Maryland house. She also was granted custody of the couple's two children … Tyson's buddy **Zab Judah** has also had a rough go of it lately. In late-December, he was arrested for failure to pay child support and for skipping out of two child-support court hearings. Then in late-January, the former 140-pound titlist's attempt to leave promoter Main Events to sign with **Don King** was blocked by a New Jersey judge, who ruled that Main Events' contract with Judah is still valid … Heavyweight **Joe Mesi** is also trying to bolt from his promoter, **Sugar Ray Leonard** Boxing, but SRLB, which had great success promoting Mesi's last three fights, contested the departure in late-January, insisting that Mesi is still under contract to them. It remained to be seen as of press time whether the dispute would go to court … After previously being led to believe he had avoided jail time for abducting his wife and children at knifepoint and taking them across state lines, former heavyweight champ **Riddick Bowe** was finally sentenced to 18 months for the crimes in mid-January … Another once-formidable heavyweight who can't stay out of trouble, **Trevor Berbick**, turned himself in to police in his native Jamaica in mid-January after an arrest warrant was issued on account of Berbick allegedly breaking into a neighbor's home and stealing several items … Hall of Famer **Aaron Pryor** sued **Carl King**, the son of Don King and the manager of heavyweight **Larry Donald**, in late-December, claiming he was paid only $2,500 of the $10,000 he was promised for training Donald last fall … Two retirements to report: **Gerry Penalosa**, who held the WBC 115-pound title for 17 months from '97-'98, announced his retirement soon after losing to **Masamori Tokuyama** in December. It was the third failed attempt by the 31-year-old Penalosa, 46-5-2 (31), to regain the title. Also hanging up the gloves was 29-year-old **Adan Vargas**. Longtime NABF bantamweight beltholder Vargas, 37-4-1 (23), came up short in three bids for major 118-pound alphabet titles … There was a ring death in Asia in late-December, and like the unusual **Pedro Alcazar** fatality in America last June, there was a delay involved. Thai bantamweight **Yodsingh Chuwatana** collapsed in his home four days after suffering a fourth-round kayo loss to **Masamitsu Ikeda** in Japan, went into a coma, and died two days later. Yodsingh, 14-4-1 (9), was 28 … Retired Dominican junior middleweight **Juan Ramon Medina-Padilla** died in a car accident in Spain in mid-January at the age of 32. Medina-Padilla, 29-5-3 (10), challenged for the WBA 154-pound belt in '94, losing a decision to **Julio Cesar Vasquez** … **Jaime Valladares**, arguably Ecuador's greatest boxer ever, died in late-January at the age of 66. Nicknamed "El Chico De Oro" ("The Golden Boy"), Valladares compiled a 55-3-10 (31) record, but fell short in his lone world title bout, losing a close decision to junior lightweight champ **Hiroshi Kobayashi** in '68 … California-based referee and judge **Larry Rozadilla**, perhaps best known for being the only judge who correctly had **Buster Douglas** leading **Mike Tyson** in their famed 1990 bout in Tokyo, died of cancer in mid-January at the age of 72. Rozadilla was inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame in '99. The last major refereeing assignment of his 35-year career was the **Roy Jones-Julio Gonzalez** title bout in July '01, after which his health prevented him from working inside the ring.

Vargas: Says he's finished at 29

THE PUNCHLINES

"I will fight my momma if she's who I was contracted to fight."

—Colorful junior lightweight Nate Campbell, prior to his January bout with Joel Casamayor

"I did a little more homework into his recent fights, which I should have done earlier, and the guys he's been fighting are embarrassing."

—*Showtime Championship Boxing* Executive Producer Jay Larkin, on Gabe Ruelas, after reaching the conclusion (quite a while after everybody else) that Ruelas was not an acceptable opponent for Acelino Freitas

AL KRATZER'S VIEW

The RING
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
2. **ROY JONES**
   Light Heavyweight
3. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Featherweight
4. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Junior Middleweight
5. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Junior Welterweight
6. **ERIK MORALES**
   Featherweight
7. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Lightweight
8. **RICARDO MAYORGA**
   Welterweight
9. **LENNOX LEWIS**
   Heavyweight
10. **VERNON FORREST**
    Welterweight

(For period ended February 11, 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Both Reggie Johnson (fifth last issue) and David Telesco (eighth last issue) depart due to not having fought in more than a year. The exit of Johnson and Telesco opens up spots for Clinton Woods at number nine and Stipe Drews at number 10.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Antonio Perugino (fourth last issue) exits the ratings after undergoing surgery to remove a blood clot from his brain. The Italian contender suffered the injury in a six-round decision win over Javier Acuna. Perugino's departure bumps up everybody listed below him one place each and makes room for Carl Daniels to return at number 10.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Ricardo Mayorga (first last issue) wins THE RING championship belt by stopping Vernon Forrest, who becomes the number-one contender. Second-ranked Antonio Margarito retains his position by stopping Andrew Lewis, who falls from fourth to eighth. Manuel Gomez (sixth last issue) has recorded no notable wins of late and is demoted to number seven. This and Lewis' downgrading allows Cory Spinks (seventh last issue) and Michele Piccirillo (eighth last issue) to advance to fifth and sixth, respectively.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Jesse James Leija (sixth last issue) tumbles to ninth following his TKO loss to world champion Kostya Tszyu. Leija's fall pushes up Micky Ward (seventh last issue), Oktay Urkal (eighth last issue), and Ben Tackie (ninth last issue) one rung each.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Carlos Hernandez (ninth last issue) advances to eighth on the strength of his victory over David Santos, which forces Cassius Baloyi down from eighth to ninth.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: Juan Manuel Marquez jumps from fourth to second by virtue of his TKO of Manuel Medina, who drops from third to fifth. Marquez' progress forces inactive Naseem Hamed (second last issue) down to third. Derrick Gainer (fifth last issue) moves into the number-four slot.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Adan Vargas (sixth last issue) has retired, which moves everybody previously ranked below him up one spot and makes room for Ricardo Vargas to come aboard at number 10.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: Gerry Penalosa (fourth last issue) has also retired. Replacing him at number four is Luis Perez, who decisioned Felix Machado. Machado slips from fifth to sixth. The reshuffling allows Martin Castillo to take over the fifth position. Jesus Rojas (seventh last issue) departs due to inactivity, which advances Mauricio Pastrana (eighth last issue), Luis Bolano (ninth last issue), and Oscar Andrade (10th last issue) one place each. Katsushige Kawashima debuts at number 10.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: Mayorga's upset TKO of Forrest (fourth last issue) sends Forrest plummeting to number 10, while Mayorga enters at number eight. The shakeup also advances Oscar De La Hoya (formerly fifth), Kostya Tszyu (sixth last issue), Erik Morales (seventh last issue), and Floyd Mayweather (eighth last issue) one place each. Shane Mosley (10th last issue) exits. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended February 11, 2003

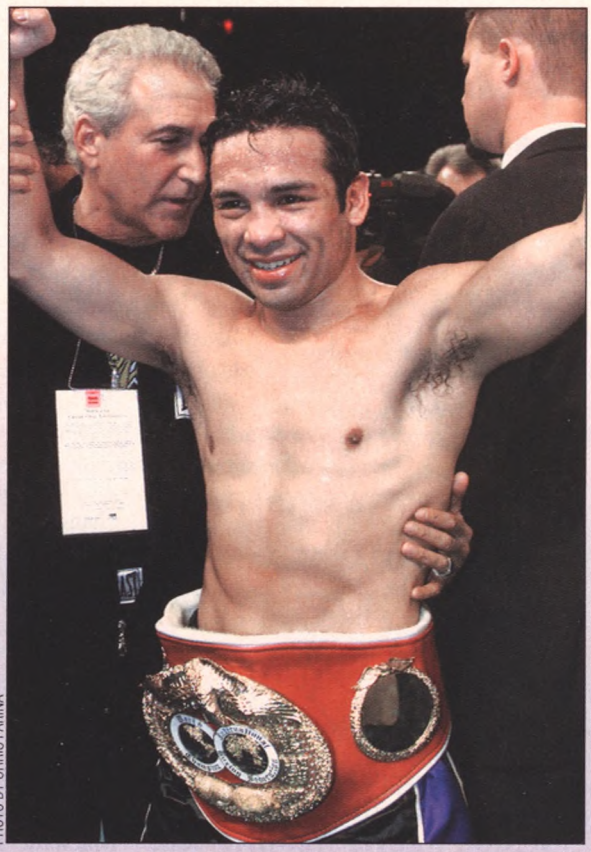


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Carlos Hernandez advanced one spot at junior lightweight by defeating David Santos

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors
Records By Fight Fax Inc.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: LENNOX LEWIS
England 40-2-1 (31)

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 40-1 (37)
2. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 36-2 (20)
3. **DAVID TUA**
New Zealand 42-3 (37)
4. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD**
Fairburn, GA 38-6-2 (25)
5. **JOHN RUIZ**
Chelsea, MA 38-4-1 (27)
6. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 35-4 (29)
7. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 32-1 (31)
8. **KIRK JOHNSON**
Canada 33-1-1 (24)
9. **MIKE TYSON**
Catskill, NY 49-4 (43)
10. **JAMEEL McCLINE**
Port Jefferson, NY 28-3-3 (16)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: OSCAR DE LA HOYA
Los Angeles, CA 35-2 (28)

1. **WINKY WRIGHT**
St. Petersburg, FL 44-3 (25)
2. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 22-2 (20)
3. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 54-5 (36)
4. **DANIEL SANTOS**
Puerto Rico 26-2-1 (20)
5. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 38-2 (35)
6. **KASSIM OUMA**
W. Palm Beach, FL 17-1-1 (12)
7. **BRONCO McKART**
Monroe, MI 45-4 (29)
8. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
Aurora, CO 34-8-1 (18)
9. **ALEX BUNEMA**
Dallas, TX 20-3-2 (12)
10. **SANTIAGO SAMANIEGO**
Panama 36-6-1 (29)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA
Mexico 56-3 (39)

1. **ERIK MORALES**
Mexico 42-1 (31)
2. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 40-2 (32)
3. **NASEEM HAMED**
England 36-1 (31)
4. **DERRICK GAINER**
Pensacola, FL 38-5-1 (24)
5. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 60-13 (27)
6. **JOHNNY TAPIA**
Albuquerque, NM 52-3-2 (28)
7. **FRANKIE TOLEDO**
Paterson, NJ 42-6-1 (17)
8. **SCOTT HARRISON**
Scotland 18-1-1 (9)
9. **LEHLO LEDWABA**
South Africa 33-2-1 (22)
10. **WILLIAM ABELYAN**
Glendale, CA 21-4-1 (11)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: PAULIE AYALA
Ft. Worth, TX 34-2 (12)

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
Philippines 35-2-1 (26)
2. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 47-3-1 (33)
3. **SALIM MEDJKOUNE**
France 40-3-1 (21)
4. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ**
Mexico 30-2-2 (21)
5. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 33-3 (24)
6. **WILLIE JORRIN**
Sacramento, CA 28-1-1 (12)
7. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA**
Venezuela 21-2-1 (12)
8. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 18-0 (14)
9. **OSAMU SATO**
Japan 26-2-2 (15)
10. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG**
Thailand 33-1-1 (16)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TIM AUSTIN**
Cincinnati, OH 25-0-1 (22)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 40-1-1 (29)
3. **JOHNNY BREDAHL**
Denmark 53-2 (26)
4. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 28-3 (26)
5. **EIDY MOYA**
Venezuela 15-2 (8)
6. **CRUZ CARBAJAL**
Mexico 22-11-1 (18)
7. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 23-3-2 (14)
8. **PETE FRISSINA**
Tarpon Springs, FL 26-3-1 (15)
9. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 13-0 (12)
10. **RICARDO VARGAS**
Mexico 33-9-3 (11)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. VASSILIY JIROV
Kazakhstan 31-0 (27)
2. JEAN-MARC MORMECK
France 28-2 (20)
3. WAYNE BRAITHWAITE
Guyana 18-0 (15)
4. JAMES TONEY
Ann Arbor, MI 65-4-2 (42)
5. JOHNNY NELSON
England 42-12-2 (28)
6. GUILLERMO JONES
Panama 29-2-2 (22)
7. O'NEIL BELL
Atlanta, GA 19-1-1 (18)
8. EZRA SELLERS
Washington, D.C. 25-5 (23)
9. VIRGIL HILL
Bismarck, ND 48-4 (23)
10. ALEXANDRE GUROV
Ukraine 32-3-1 (27)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ROY JONES
Pensacola, FL 47-1 (38)

1. ANTONIO TARVER
Orlando, FL 20-1 (17)
2. DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI
Germany 47-0 (37)
3. ERIC HARDING
Philadephia, PA 21-2-1 (7)
4. MONTELL GRIFFIN
Chicago, IL 44-3 (29)
5. BRUNO GIRARD
France 42-2-2 (7)
6. JULIO GONZALEZ
Huntington Beach, CA 32-1 (21)
7. LOU DEL VALLE
Bronx, NY 31-3-1 (21)
8. GEORGE JONES
Paterson, NJ 18-2 (13)
9. CLINTON WOODS
England 33-2 (19)
10. STIPE DREWS
Croatia 23-0 (11)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. JOE CALZAGHE
Wales 35-0 (28)
2. SVEN OTTKE
Germany 29-0 (6)
3. ANTWUN ECHOLS
Davenport, IA 29-4-1 (26)
4. ERIC LUCAS
Canada 36-4-3 (13)
5. BYRON MITCHELL
Ozark, AL 25-1-1 (18)
6. CHARLES BREWER
Philadelphia, PA 39-9 (27)
7. MADS LARSEN
Denmark 43-1 (36)
8. MANUEL SIACA
Puerto Rico 16-4 (15)
9. ANTHONY MUNDINE
Australia 17-1 (13)
10. MARKUS BEYER
Germany 26-1 (11)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 41-2-1 (30)

1. HARRY SIMON
Namibia 23-0 (17)
2. WILLIAM JOPPY
Washington, D.C. 34-2-1 (25)
3. HOWARD EASTMAN
England 35-1 (32)
4. ROBERT ALLEN
Atlanta, GA 34-4 (25)
5. TITO MENDOZA
Panama 27-4 (20)
6. SERGEY TATEVOSYAN
Russia 16-3 (12)
7. HASSINE CHERIFI
France 33-6-1 (20)
8. RODNEY JONES
Lafayette, LA 27-3 (17)
9. ERLAND BETARE
France 35-7-2 (16)
10. CARL DANIELS
St. Louis, MO 48-4-1 (30)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: RICARDO MAYORGA
Nicaragua 24-3-1 (22)

1. VERNON FORREST
Atlanta, GA 35-1 (26)
2. ANTONIO MARGARITO
Mexico 28-3 (19)
3. THOMAS DAMGAARD
Denmark 31-0 (25)
4. ANTONIO DIAZ
Coachella, CA 37-4 (26)
5. CORY SPINKS
St. Louis, MO 30-2 (11)
6. MICHELE PICCIRILLO
Italy 37-1 (23)
7. MANUEL GOMEZ
Mexico 21-10 (16)
8. ANDREW LEWIS
Guyana 22-2-1 (20)
9. JAWAID KHALIQ
England 20-1-1 (12)
10. RAY OLIVEIRA
New Bedford, MA 44-8-2 (21)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU
Australia 30-1-1 (24)

1. SHARMBA MITCHELL
Washington, D.C. 51-3 (30)
2. ZAB JUDAH
Brooklyn, NY 28-1 (21)
3. ARTURO GATTI
Jersey City, NJ 35-6 (28)
4. DeMARCUS CORLEY
Washington, D.C. 28-1-1 (16)
5. VIVIAN HARRIS
Brooklyn, NY 22-1-1 (16)
6. MICKY WARD
Lowell, MA 38-12 (27)
7. OKTAY URKAL
Germany 32-1 (10)
8. BEN TACKIE
Ghana 24-3 (15)
9. JESSE JAMES LEIJA
San Antonio, TX 43-6-2 (17)
10. DIOBELYS HURTADO
Miami, FL 35-3-1 (23)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: FLOYD MAYWEATHER
Grand Rapids, MI 29-0 (20)

1. JOSE LUIS CASTILLO
Mexico 46-6-1 (42)
2. STEVE JOHNSTON
Denver, CO 34-2-1 (16)
3. PAUL SPADAFORA
Pittsburgh, PA 36-0 (14)
4. LEONARD DORIN
Canada 21-0 (7)
5. JUAN LAZCANO
El Paso, TX 31-2-1 (24)
6. ANGEL MANFREDY
Gary, IN 40-6-1 (29)
7. ARTUR GRIGORIAN
Uzbekistan 36-0 (22)
8. RAUL BALBI
France 48-6-1 (33)
9. ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ
Mexico 48-5-1 (33)
10. JULIEN LORCY
France 53-3-2 (37)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. ACELINO FREITAS
Brazil 32-0 (29)
2. JOEL CASAMAYOR
Miami, FL 29-1 (18)
3. JESUS CHAVEZ
Mexico 38-2 (27)
4. STEVE FORBES
Las Vegas, NV 22-1 (6)
5. YODSANAN NANTHACHAI
Thailand 28-2-1 (24)
6. PHILLIP NDOU
South Africa 29-1 (28)
7. SIRIMONGKOL SINGMANASSAK
Thailand 41-1 (23)
8. CARLOS HERNANDEZ
Bellflower, CA 38-3-1 (23)
9. CASSIUS BALOYI
South Africa 28-1 (16)
10. NATE CAMPBELL
Jacksonville, FL 23-1 (21)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. MASAMORI TOKUYAMA
North Korea 28-2-1 (8)
2. ALEXANDER MUNOZ
Venezuela 23-0 (23)
3. FERNANDO MONTIEL
Mexico 25-0-1 (19)
4. LUIS PEREZ
Nicaragua 21-1 (14)
5. MARTIN CASTILLO
Mexico 22-1 (14)
6. FELIX MACHADO
Venezuela 22-4-1 (11)
7. MAURICIO PASTRANA
Colombia 29-3-1 (19)
8. LUIS BOLANO
Colombia 37-0 (28)
9. OSCAR ANDRADE
Mexico 30-22-1 (17)
10. KATSUSHIGE KAWASHIMA
Japan 23-2 (16)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. ERIC MOREL
Madison, WI 32-0 (18)
2. PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM
Thailand 45-2 (25)
3. IRENE PACHECO
Colombia 27-0 (20)
4. MZUKISI SIKALI
South Africa 27-4-2 (16)
5. HAWK MAKEPULA
South Africa 20-2 (13)
6. MALCOLM TUNACAO
Philippines 13-1-2 (9)
7. PETER CULSHAW
England 23-1-1 (12)
8. GERSON GUERRERO
Mexico 25-4 (19)
9. OMAR NARVAEZ
Argentina 13-0-1 (7)
10. DAMAEN KELLY
Ireland 18-1 (8)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. ROSENDO ALVAREZ
Nicaragua 31-2-1 (20)
2. JORGE ARCE
Mexico 31-3-1 (23)
3. BEBIS MENDOZA
Colombia 28-1 (23)
4. PICHIT SIRIWAT
Thailand 25-2 (12)
5. NELSON DIEPPA
Puerto Rico 19-2-2 (11)
6. YOSAM CHOI
South Korea 24-2 (13)
7. HIDENOBU HONDA
Japan 24-1 (12)
8. MELCHOR COB CASTRO
Mexico 66-8-4 (30)
9. ZOLANI PETELO
South Africa 17-3-2 (9)
10. WENDYL JANIOLA
Philippines 11-0 (3)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. JOSE AGUIRRE
Mexico 28-1-1 (17)
2. MIGUEL BARRERA
Colombia 19-0-2 (11)
3. NOEL ARAMBULET
Venezuela 19-2-1 (10)
4. ROBERTO LEYVA
Mexico 21-1-1 (18)
5. CHANA PORPAOIN
Thailand 48-2-2 (17)
6. KEITARO HOSHINO
Japan 22-9 (5)
7. JOMA GAMBOA
Philippines 32-7-2 (22)
8. DANIEL REYES
Colombia 28-1 (22)
9. KERMIN GUARDIA
Colombia 33-2 (20)
10. JUAN PALACIOS
Nicaragua 10-2 (8)

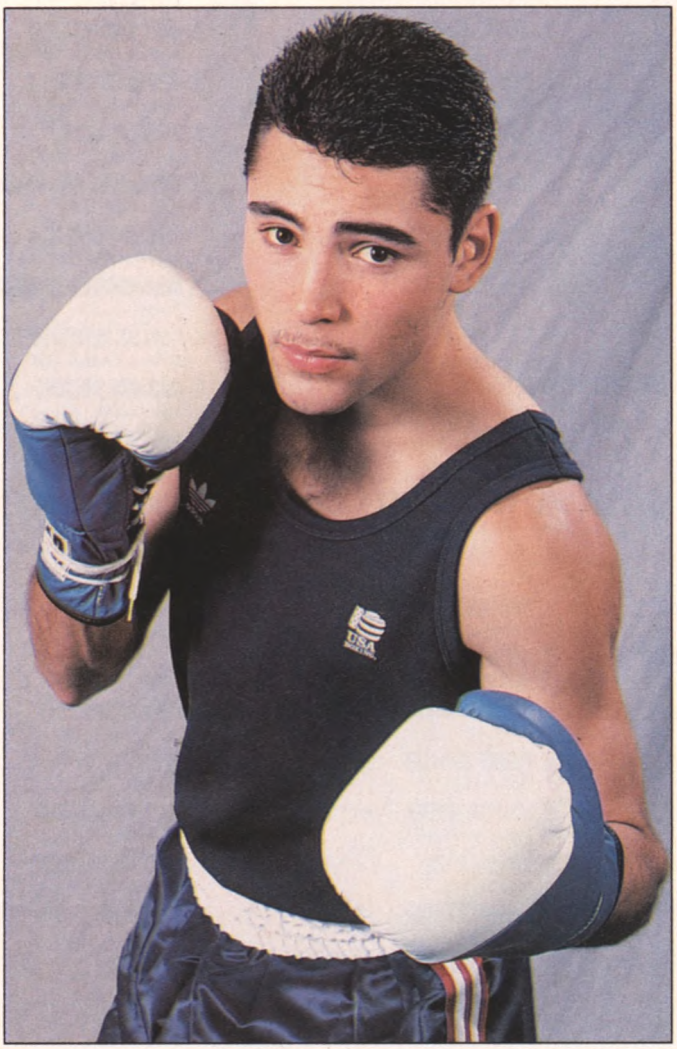
RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

20/20 VISION

As hard as it is for me to believe, this is my 20th year of writing about the Sweet Science. Years on the boxing beat, though, are like years in a dog's life. Because there's no off-season, 20 years of watching fights, hanging around gyms, working the phones, and combing the agate type is probably the equivalent of covering some other sport for 40 years. But, hey, what's an extra two decades when you're having fun?

Nobody has thrown me a party or presented me with an engraved watch yet, but surely that's only a matter of working out the details. In the meantime, my own way of reflecting on those 20 years is to take a look at the 20 biggest changes in the fight game during that time.



Since this kid won gold, Olympic boxing hasn't been the same

Here they are, from least important to most important:

20) Overhype in overdrive: The practice of going gaga over anybody who turns in an impressive showing seemed to start when Mark Breland (a.k.a. "The next Sugar Ray Leonard") won a gold medal at the '84 Olympics. In just the past three years, we've listened to the media cheerleaders lose their minds over Prince Naseem Hamed, Felix Trinidad, Zab Judah, Shane Mosley, and Vernon Forrest, who was just slapped silly by Ricardo Mayorga. And speaking of Mayorga, *wow*. Is he the second coming of Roberto Duran or what? Such confidence and power and …

19) Seasnore: Atlantic City used to host a fight card every weekend and once staged three unified heavyweight title bouts in eight months. No more. Though still maintaining a boxing identity, A.C. gets beaten out by Las Vegas for the superfights and often faces stiff competition for the smaller bouts from Connecticut's Mohegan Sun.

18) A shriveling Big Apple: My first time sitting in a ringside press section was at New York's Felt Forum in '83. The monthly cards there weren't great, but at least they were regularly scheduled in the most famous fight town on earth. Not only are the small shows in New York infrequent these days, but Madison Square Garden's main arena hosts only a show or two a year.

17) Vegas' distribution of wealth: Twenty years ago, Caesars Palace was the king of boxing on The Strip. Now, though, the MGM Grand and Mandalay Bay have just as much clout, if not more. A good thing? Sure, but there was still nothing like the outdoor ring at Caesars, no matter if it was serving as Marvin Hagler's battlefield or Fan Man's runway.

16) **Third men out:** Through most of my tenure as a fight scribe, Arthur Mercante Sr., Richard Steele, and Mills Lane were boxing's three best referees. Now, they're all retired, and the fight game is the poorer for it.

15) **Ladies night:** Women's boxing was once little more than tomboy Jackie Tonawanda flattening a truck stop waitress in Upstate New York while 100 people watched. Nowadays, the distaff Dempseys are popular enough to secure endorsement deals (Laila Ali), pose for *Playboy* (Mia St. John), and *headline* pay-per-view cards (Ali vs. Jacqui Frazier-Lyde, St. John vs. Christy Martin).

14) **Friday night fever:** ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* features not just fisticuffs, but a studio show that is boxing's version of the *The NFL Today*. It's the first place on the tube that breaking fight news has been reported on a regular basis since Howard Cosell's *Sportsbeat* went off the air in the '80s.

13) **Tarnished rings:** The last time Olympic boxing meant something in this country was when Oscar De La Hoya won the lone U.S. gold in Barcelona in '92. Since then, Olympic fights have been aired on tape delay, shown at some absurdly late hour, dumped on a cable channel, or all of the above.

12) **Unanimous editorial decision:** Call me self-serving, but THE RING's Championship Policy is a godsend to just about anyone who ever ate Tylenol like M&M's while trying to make sense of interim champions, super champions, and all that other alphabet malarkey. Now, as we see it, there's one champ in each weight class, and the WBC, WBA, and IBF are D.O.A. To which we say, R.I.P., you S.O.B.s.

11) **Creating a Classic:** One day, ESPN Classic came along and kids didn't have to listen to Dad and Grandpa anymore. They could suddenly see for themselves how fast Robinson moved, how hard Liston hit, and how much Graziano bled.

10) **Robo Champ:** Before Evander Holyfield showed that a fighter could get results from hi-tech exercise machines, computerized diets, and heavy weightlifting, boxing trainers lived and died by the jump rope, speedbag, and medicine ball.

9) **Hugs and kisses:** De La Hoya has become the first Latin fighter embraced by the American mainstream in a positive way. (Roberto Duran was loved as an assassin.) Heck, he's even on *Hollywood Squares*.

8) **Missing link:** Dan Duva was no pal of mine, but he was an outstanding promoter whose work hasn't been carried on by Main Events, Duva Boxing, or anybody else in the years since his passing. We'll never know whom he would have acquired for his stable and how many good matchups we've been denied because he's not still here.

7) **Hall of a good idea:** Twenty years ago, the "hall of fame" existed only on paper. Today, The International Boxing Hall of Fame is a real place with real exhibits, real inductions, and real lumps in the throats of the honorees.

6) **Big George II & III:** My first story for London Publishing was about George Foreman in retirement. Since that piece ran, he has come back to, remarkably, regain the heavyweight crown, completely remake his image, join HBO's broadcast team, write a self-help book, and become the pitchman for everything from barbecue grills to mufflers.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

From his heyday through today, Tyson has been ever-evolving and ever-fascinating

5) **Decline of "The Greatest":** Muhammad Ali's health has gotten steadily worse in the past 20 years. And no amount of reassurances from his inner circle makes me feel better while watching the man struggle to speak or, as was the case in one interview, stay awake. Ali was supposed to be boxing's spokesman at this stage of his life. Instead, he is its sad, eerie reminder that even the best can pay a steep price in a sport so risky.

4) **"The Network Of Champions" indeed:** Great camera angles. Eavesdropping microphones. Marquee matchups. Lampley and Merchant. HBO has emerged as the undisputed king of TV boxing during my career. From Arturo Gatti-Micky Ward to a *Real Sports With Bryant Gumbel* segment on the divergent life paths of "Little Red" Lopez and Bobby Chacon, HBO is forever giving boxaholics something to talk about.

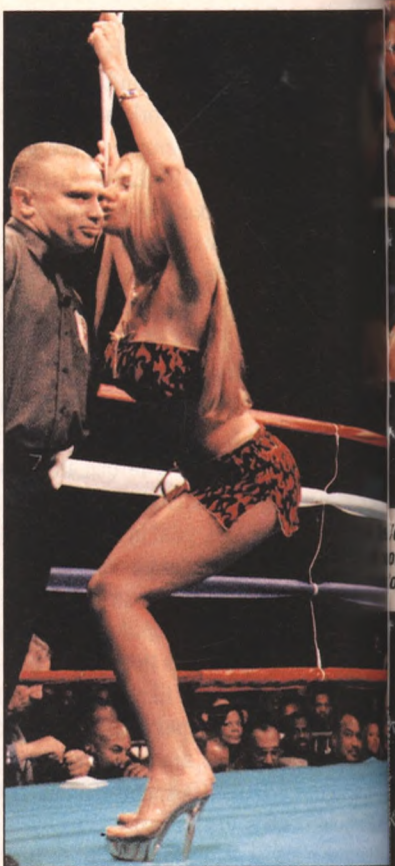
3) **"Kid Dynamite" explodes and implodes:** In the mid-'80s, the heavyweight division was a joke, a fat farm full of loads like Greg Page and Tony Tubbs. Mike Tyson changed that. From his decking Trevor Berbick three times with one punch, through his destruction of Michael Spinks, marriage to Robin Givens, 4 a.m. streetfights, unraveling at the Tokyo Dome, incarceration, comeback, ear bite, and walloping from Lennox Lewis, there has been no more compelling sports figure in the past two decades.

2) **Pay-per-view becomes the norm:** The positive: Enjoying Lewis-Tyson from the comfort of your La-Z-Boy instead of in a drafty hockey arena, where the closed-circuit telecast is marred by garbled sound and a fuzzy picture and you end up sitting next to a smelly drunk. The negative: Having to pay an obscene $34.95 for Juan Manuel Marquez vs. Manuel Medina, a bout that would have played on CBS for free 20 years ago.

1) **Free TV fights go the way of *The Lawrence Welk Show:*** Yes, NBC might air some fights again, but we'll never again see the quantity and quality of action shown on NBC, CBS, and ABC in the '80s. On top of that, ever since the day the chin music died, we've been deprived of the blow-by-blow work of Marv Albert and Tim Ryan and Alex Wallau's analysis. Where have you gone, Frank "The Animal" Fletcher? ■

CAMERA CLICKS

Larry Holmes, Tim Witherspoon, and countless other fighters might take issue with Don King being associated with an organization whose motto is "Sharing is caring," but nonetheless, there was DK recently, lending a hand with the Salvation Army. If King really does care and wants to share, maybe he'll give our eyes a rest and donate that played-out denim jacket of his to a Salvation Army thrift shop.

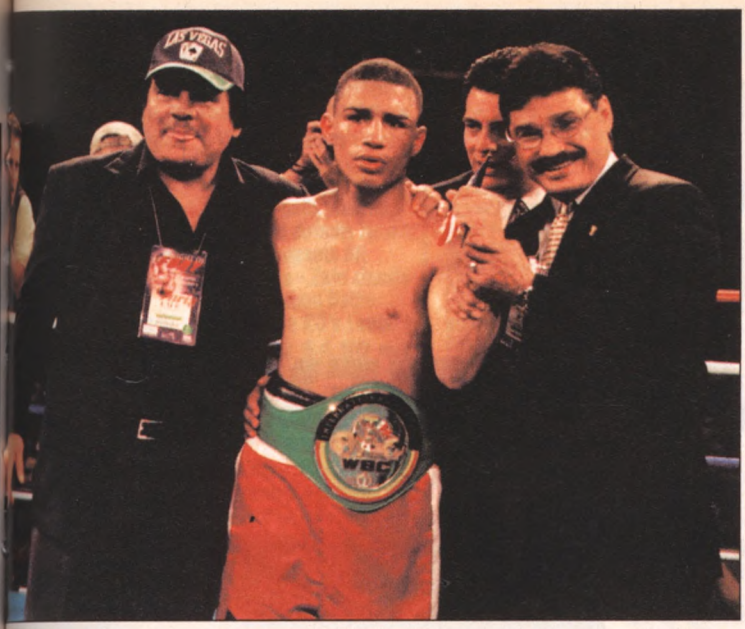


Most referees don't go around stealing each other's catchphrases, but you can be certain Kenny Chevalier wanted to yell "Let's get it on!" at this particular moment. We can't help but wonder if Joe Cortez would have been "fair but firm" if he was in Chevalier's position.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

"What did you say your last name was? Mays-weather?" No, Chico, that's baseball legend Willie Mays, who is in no way related to Floyd Mayweather, so you can unclench your fist. These two exceptional sluggers, Mays and Diego Corrales, met up in Atlantic City following Corrales' comeback win over Michael Davis in January.

You would think this would be the last thing two boxers would want to do after finishing a grueling 12-round fight, but Felix Machado and Luis Perez went straight from their boxing match into a chicken fight, with the International Chicken Fighting Federation's junior bantamweight belt at stake. Perez made it two-for-two by pecking his way to another decision, and word is he'll be taking on one of Roy Jones' gamecocks next.



...Miguel Cotto, now that you've won your first 14 fights, why don't we stop calling you the next Felix Trinidad, and instead make you pose in the ring with all-time greats Roberto Duran and Alexis Arguello. No pressure here.

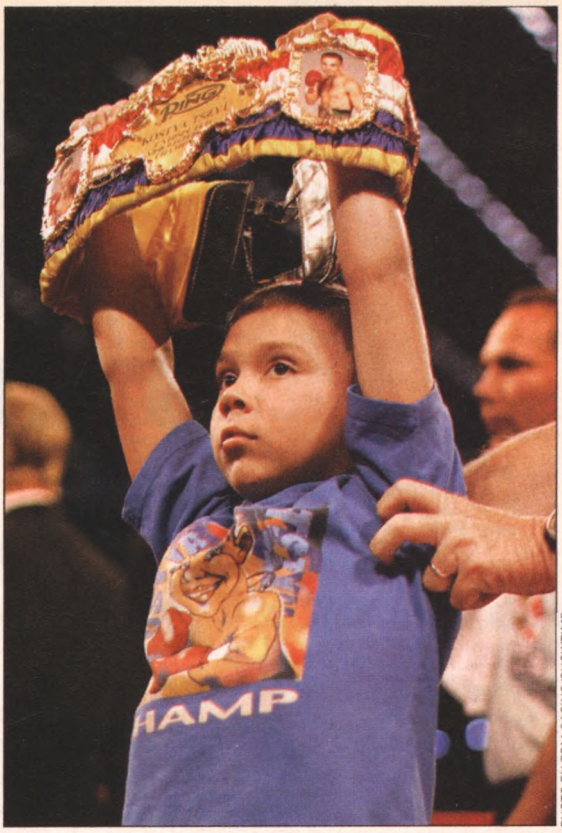


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

The first unusual thing you notice about this photo is that there's an eight-year-old holding a RING *belt, apparently shattering Wilfred Benitez' record for youngest world champion. But the second unusual thing you notice is that there's a hand creeping in on the right side of the photo, tickling young Timophey Tszyu, junior welter champ Kostya's eldest son, under his left armpit. No truth to the rumor that Michael Jackson was in Australia in January.*

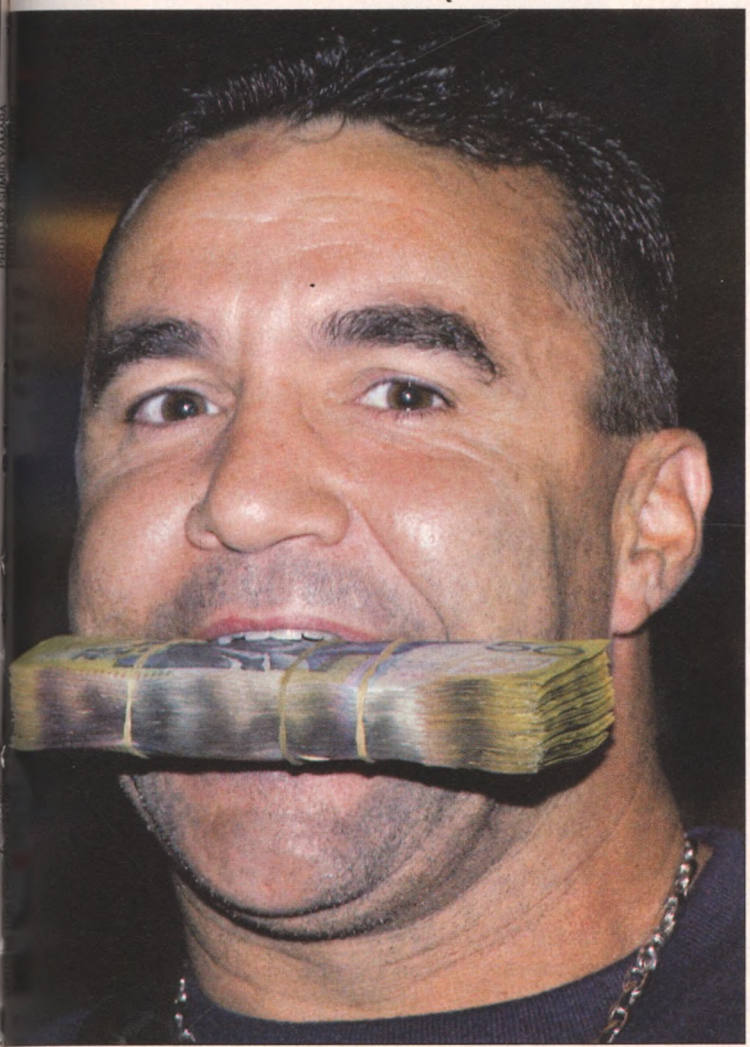


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

...Fenech is one guy who isn't afraid to put his money where his mouth is. The Hall of ...er and three-division former titlist brought the cliché to life recently in his native ...alia, where he was attending the Kostya Tszyu-Jesse James Leija fight.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

Paul Shaffer, eat your heart out. Larry Holmes proved he could rattle a man's ears in more ways than one when he stepped up to the keyboard on Late Night With David Letterman *back in 1987. The following year, "The Easton Assassin" went on to perform a Stupid Human Trick when he signed a contract to fight a prime Mike Tyson.*

NEW FACES

STEVEN LUEVANO

Featherweight

By Joe Santoliquito

Some people wake up to an alarm clock. Some awake to the babble of radio talk show hosts. And there are even those who still wake to a crowing rooster. Steven Luevano wakes up almost every morning to a fist in the face. Luckily for him, it's a small fist. Luevano's one-year-old daughter has this bad habit of putting her baby paws on her pop when Luevano is dreaming of world titles.

You would figure a boxer would be used to getting an occasional unexpected shot to the jaw. Not Luevano. When he's awake, hardly anyone can hit him.

"I don't like getting hit, because I'm more of a boxer than I am a puncher," Luevano said. "So you can understand I'm not too crazy about my daughter waking me every morning by punching me in the face."

When fighting people his own size instead of his daughter, Rebecca, the 5'7" southpaw featherweight from La Puente, California, has gone 15-0 (7) in his first three years as a professional. Luevano, who turned 22 on March 3, also has an extensive amateur background, having compiled a record of 186-17. He lost to eventual Olympic silver medalist Rocky Juarez at the 2000 U.S. Olympic Trials by a point, but Luevano scored a huge point for himself by stunningly knocking out tough veteran Ivan Alvarez in one round in October '02.

Alvarez is no joke. He went on to hand Junior Jones a 10-round decision loss in his next fight, and he's lasted the 12-round distance with Oscar Larios, Bones Adams, and

(Continued on page 61)

PRO RECORD

2000		
June 17	Hugo Rosales, Bell Gardens, CA	KO 2
Aug. 20	Joseph Salazar, Tucson, AZ	KO 3
Sept. 3	Ignacio Gonzalez, Yerington, NV	KO 3
Sept. 17	Martin Llamas, Phoenix, AZ	W 4
Nov. 5	Enrique Valenzuela, Chula Vista, CA	KO 2
Nov. 26	Miguel Medina, Phoenix	KO 1
2001		
Feb. 4	Jacob Godinez, Concho, OK	W 4
March 4	Francisco Rodriguez, Reno, NV	W 4
April 8	Martin Llamas, Laughlin, NV	W 4
June 3	Juan Carlos Martinez, San Jacinto, CA	W 6
July 15	Freddie Castro, San Jacinto	Tech. Win 4
2002		
June 21	Justo Sanchez, Las Vegas	KO 4
Aug. 9	Juan Garcia, Las Vegas	W 6
Oct. 4	Ivan Alvarez, Las Vegas	KO 1
Nov. 1	Aristeo Perez, Las Vegas	W 6

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
15	15	0	0	7

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- Marciano's KOs Walcott
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- Hagler nails Hearns
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- Graziano - Zale classic
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No Longer A FIGHTER, But Still A BIG-TIME PITCHER

GEORGE FOREMAN

"I Couldn't Afford *Not* To Leave Boxing"

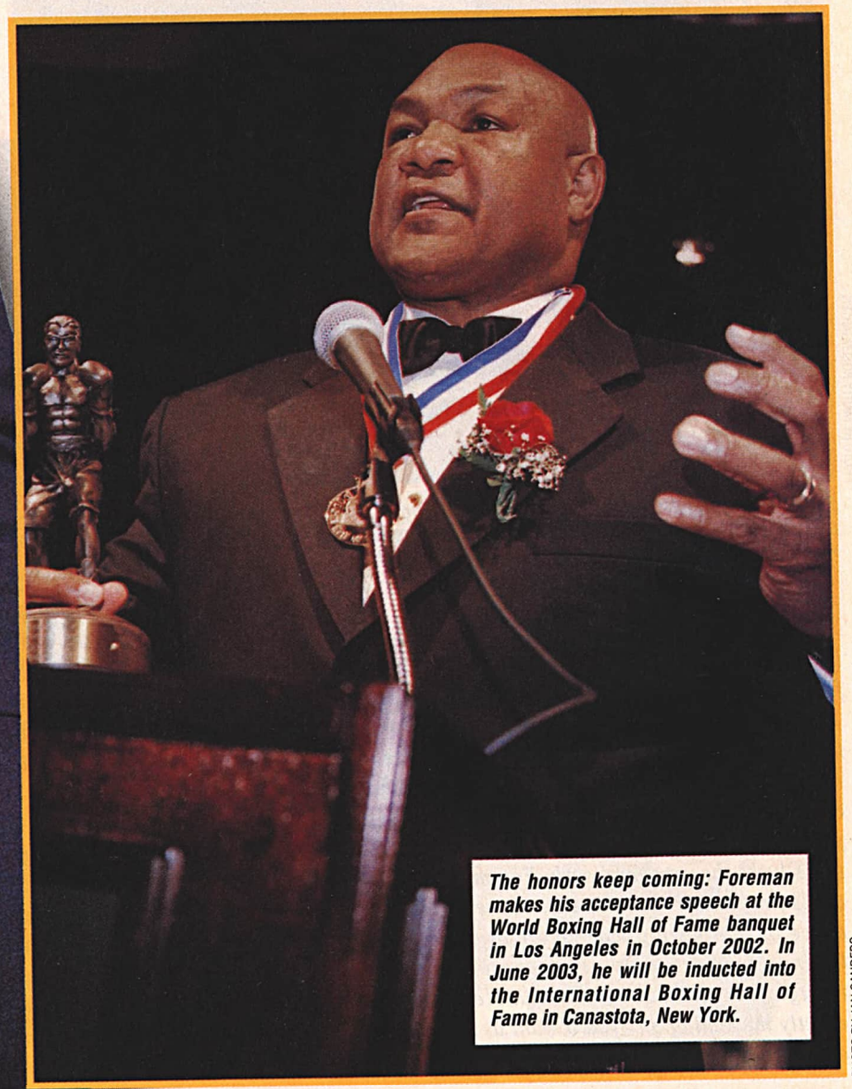
When George Foreman retired following his decision loss to Shannon Briggs in November 1997, few took his announcement very seriously. After all, it had been a close fight and many felt Big George deserved the decision. He'd be back, if not to seek vengeance, then surely because somebody would dangle enough money under his nose to persuade him to lace 'em up again. Besides, Foreman was Mr. Comeback, the guy who had regained the heavyweight title after 10 years on the sidelines. No way he was going to walk away after dropping a controversial call to a guy who was still in diapers when Foreman knocked out Joe Frazier to win the heavyweight title the first time.

But more than five years have passed since that night in Atlantic City, and Foreman has not fought since. The man who had beaten the odds with the most amazing comeback in boxing history has wisely resisted the temptation that led to such bad endings for so many others, including Foreman's most famous rival, Muhammad Ali.

Of course, Foreman is one ex-champ who doesn't have to worry about money, having become an extraordinarily successful pitchman for products ranging from mufflers to fried chicken to Foreman's wildly popular cooking grill. His ubiquitous commercials and role as color commentator for HBO's ***World Championship Boxing*** *series have kept Foreman very much in the public eye, but in January '03 he made headlines again when he was elected to the International Boxing Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility.*

Foreman's celebrity has grown to a point where he is one of sports' genuine living legends, a man whose accomplishments both in and out of the ring have made him an integral part of the American fabric. Unlike Frazier, he has been able to put his crushing loss to Ali behind him and make a place for himself in the world divorced of bitterness and envy. Prompted by Foreman's recent election to the IBHOF, THE RING *Editor-in-Chief Nigel Collins spoke at length with Foreman in late-January. Collins reports:*

"I believe that there's a good chance that Foreman will go down in history as much more than just a great fighter and



The honors keep coming: Foreman makes his acceptance speech at the World Boxing Hall of Fame banquet in Los Angeles in October 2002. In June 2003, he will be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York.

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

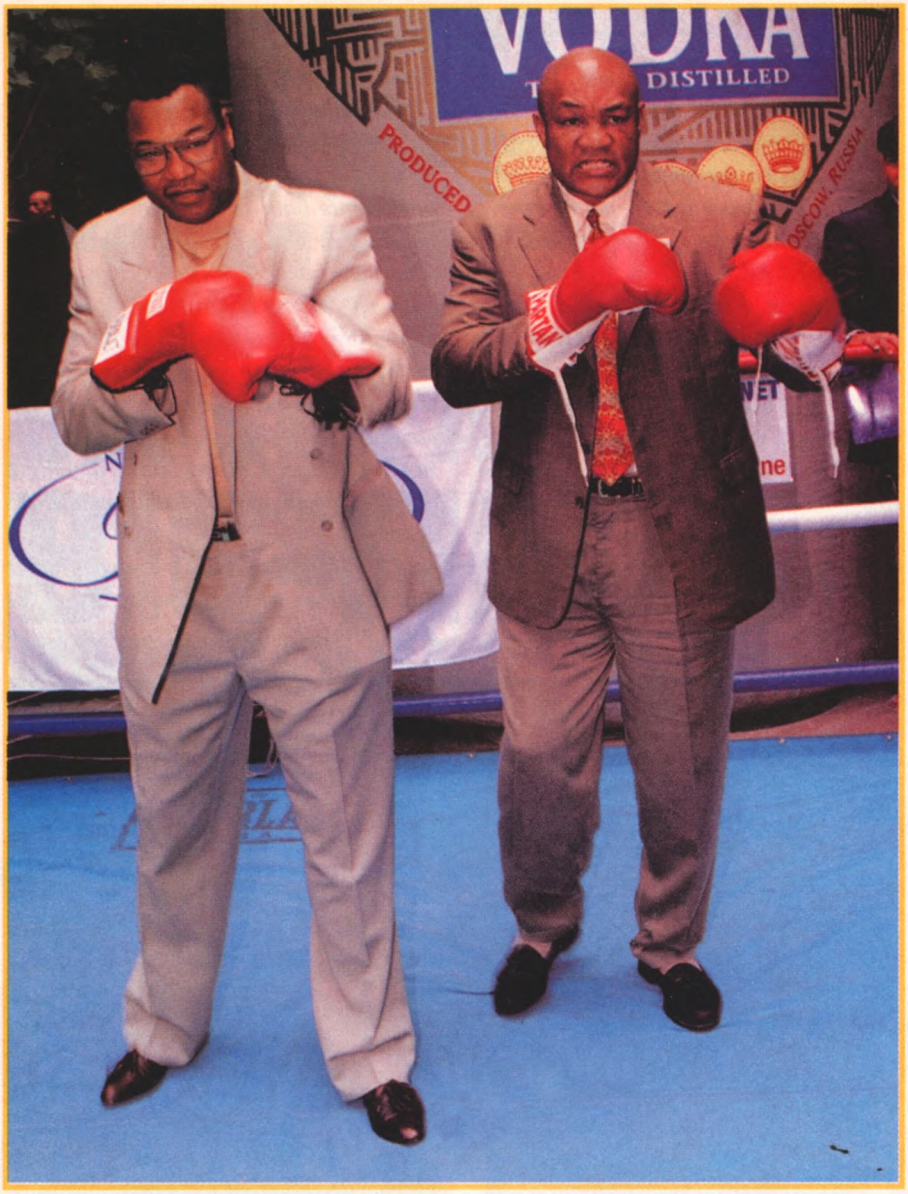


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Battle of the grandfathers: Foreman almost came out of retirement again in 1998 for a $10-million bout with fellow former champ Larry Holmes. But when promoters failed to come up with all the money, Big George decided to stay retired.

an extraordinary salesman. A couple of hundred years from now, he'll most likely be remembered as a John Henry-like figure, part man, part myth, someone who defied conventional wisdom and became larger than life.

"There are some who claim that the cuddly, avuncular image that Foreman presents is a front, and that behind the smile lurks the arrogant, surly Foreman of his first career. But there was no evidence of that during our conversation. George was friendly, cooperative, thoughtful, and above all, humble—exactly the kind of guy you'd want as an all-American hero."

THE RING: You were inducted into the World Boxing Hall of Fame this fall and in June you will be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York. What are your thoughts on receiving these honors?

George Foreman: It kind of surprised me because I went into boxing just to have some fun and lose some weight. I never thought I could be a good boxer. Then I saw Muhammad Ali on a television show bouncing around, and I decided I could do that too, bounce around just like him and make people pay some attention to me.

Then I was in New York at Jimmy Jacobs' office, when he had the Big Fights. I'd never seen boxing films before, and Jacobs showed me film clips of Joe Louis and a lot of other fighters. When I saw Joe Louis, I said, "That's what I want to do!" So I started to try to imitate him. In my mind, I was just going to knock people out with hard shots. That's all I tried to do: imitate great athletes, great fighters. And, of course, I hung around with Sonny Liston to get my meanness. I thought I was going to be mean like him.

Never did I think in my wildest imagination that somebody would honor me at the Hall of Fame, along with Joe Louis and Muhammad Ali. I was just trying to copy those guys.

THE RING: What kind of photo do you want on your plaque at the Hall of Fame, the original George with hair, or the new George with no hair?

GF: *(chuckles)* It really wouldn't matter, because I'm so proud of both careers.

THE RING: Do you have any regrets about retiring after losing a controversial decision to Shannon Briggs in 1997?

GF: It had got to the point where boxing was taking a lot of time away from my business interests. I really didn't have the time to devote myself full-time to boxing. So I had to make a choice, and business was what I really wanted to do. You only have a boxing match every now and then. But I was in business 24-7. I couldn't afford *not* to leave boxing. I really couldn't.

THE RING: There was the proposed fight with Larry Holmes that eventually fell through. Was that the closest you came to coming back?

GF: It was real close because the guy offered $10-million. People ask what will stop the rabbit from going into the cabbage patch. Well, if there's no more cabbage, he won't go. But $10-million is a lot of cabbage. I didn't believe it until the guy fulfilled most of the obligation, but when they got down to the last, they couldn't. But that would have done it. I didn't want to do it, but I didn't want to look back and say that I turned down $10-million.

THE RING: Would you have come back for a fight with Mike Tyson?

GF: No. That was a fight I wanted to do earlier in my career. Everybody was talking about the dangerous Mike Tyson, how he'll attack and beat anybody. When I came back into boxing, that was all I would hear, so that was a challenge. It was just like Joe Frazier all over again. I said, "Boy, I've got to fight him." But as soon as Buster Douglas beat Mike Tyson, fair and square, the fly had lost all of his legs, if you know what I mean. I didn't have any more interest in doing it because I wouldn't have proved anything.

THE RING: Do you still get the urge to fight?

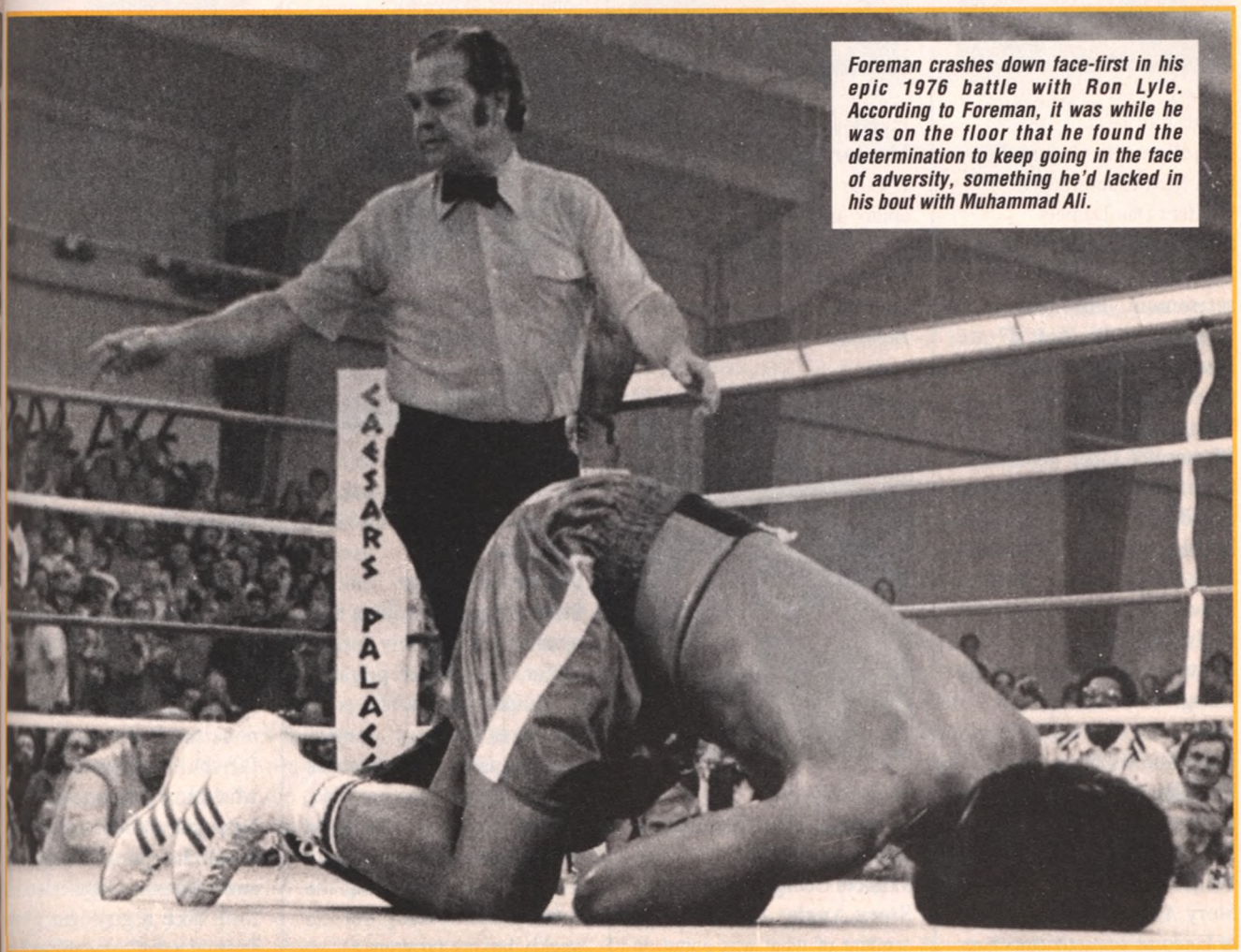
GF: I do. I really do.

THE RING: Can you explain that feeling a bit more?

GF: You're a writer, and it takes years to learn how to do it so that you don't have to go ask other people how to do it. You know that, hey, I can do this whole thing. I don't need anybody. I can put this on the front page if I want to. You get to a point where you can do it all, and all of a sudden, hey, that's it, no more. Well, that's the way I walk around feeling sometimes. I really do. So the urge is like, "Man, I can do this." I saw Evander Holyfield lose to Chris Byrd the other night, and I said, "You gotta be kidding!" And then everybody is saying how tough the Klitschko brothers are and how hard they can hit. I'm thinking, *Man, you gotta be kidding!* I

"Everybody is saying how tough the Klitschko brothers are and how hard they can hit. I'm thinking, *Man, you gotta be kidding!* I have to almost tie myself down."

PHOTO BY WAYNE J. NADORF



Foreman crashes down face-first in his epic 1976 battle with Ron Lyle. According to Foreman, it was while he was on the floor that he found the determination to keep going in the face of adversity, something he'd lacked in his bout with Muhammad Ali.

have to almost tie myself down. I tell my wife that I can do it, and she says, "Well, that's the way you want to leave it, George, when you still feel like you can do it."

THE RING: You still look in pretty good shape.

GF: I have to work out a lot. If I don't, I think I'll die. The curse that happens to all athletes is that after we finish we decide that we're going to lead a normal life. And that's a killer.

THE RING: What was the biggest difference between the first George Foreman and the one who came back after 10 years to regain the heavyweight title?

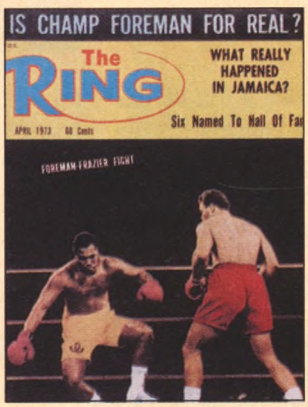
GF: I changed. I wasn't a nice person outside of the ring, and I didn't have a satisfying life outside of the ring the first time. The reflection was there in the ring.

THROUGH THE YEARS WITH BIG GEORGE

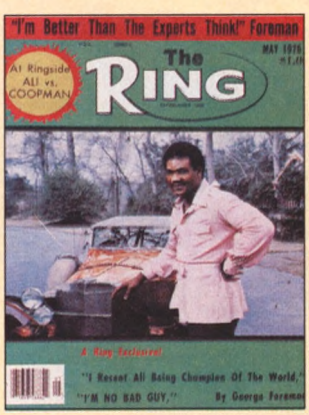
The November 1970 issue of THE RING marked Foreman's debut as a cover subject. During the ensuing years, he has graced the cover of "The Bible Of Boxing" numerous times, including the issue you're holding. We thought it would be both fun and informative to look back at some of those cover stories and see where Foreman was at that point in his career and what THE RING was saying about him.

Date: July 1971
Headline: "Is George Foreman Next Champ?"
Writer: Dan Daniels
Story Angle: With champion Joe Frazier talking about retirement, Foreman, then unbeaten in his first 27 pro bouts, was already considered the most likely person to take "Smokin 'Joe's" place.
Memorable Line: "[Foreman's trainer Dick] Sadler is sitting on a golden egg. He is waiting for hatching, which will mean millions to Foreman ... [Sadler] almost dislikes a plethora of praise for Foreman ... He knows Foreman is human, and young."

Date: April 1973
Headline: "Foreman's Kayo Of Frazier One Of Top Feats In Boxing History"
Writer: Nat Loubet
Story Angle: Detailed account of Foreman's upset victory over

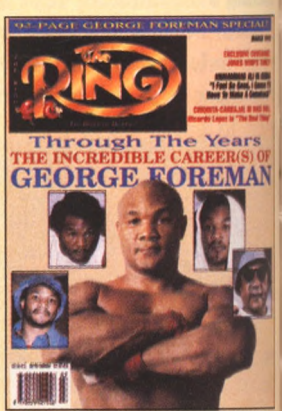


Frazier in Kingston, Jamaica.
Memorable Line: "Maybe Frazier left a lot of his fight ability in his bout with Ali, but he was still a formidable fighting machine—and take nothing away from the new champion. He won it—he won it big."



Date: May 1976
Headline: "George Foreman Speaks In Depth"
Writer: George Foreman
Story Angle: A first-person account of what was going on in the mind of the former heavyweight champ in the aftermath of his brutal fight with Ron Lyle.
Memorable Line: "I need boxing more than it needs me. Boxing gives me drive, a reason to get up. Nothing else does that ... Boxing gives me something to live for."

Date: May 1988
Headline: "The Comeback Continues: Foreman Sets Sights On Tyson"
Writer: Jack Welsh
Story Angle: Foreman was seven bouts into his second career, having just polished off Guido Trane. While many boxing experts still considered Big George's comeback a joke, fans felt otherwise, and the rating for his fight with Rocky Sekorski was a 4.6, more than doubling the usual ESPN rating for its weekly boxing program.
Memorable Line: "I'm a full-time pastor who is moonlighting as a boxer. But the reason I came back is M-O-N-E-Y and a chance to win back the title."



Date: March 1995
Headline: "Buy George: The Marketing Of A 46-Year-Old Phenomenon"
Writer: Ron Borges
Story Angle: In the wake of his stunning knockout of Michael Moorer to regain the heavyweight title, Foreman had become just as much of a juggernaut in the commercial endorsement field as he was inside the ring.
Memorable Line: "Right now, the Big George look—fat, bald, and smiling—is what most corporations, both here and abroad, are looking to sell. It's been that way ever since Foreman made Moorer look like a guy in a Sealy Posturepedic commercial."

The second time around, I was totally fulfilled in life outside of the ring, totally contented. And, of course, that also showed when I got back into the ring. You cannot beat happy, and I was happy. That's why it was so hard to beat me. The first time around, I didn't have my life together and it reflected when I was boxing. I was tight and tense because that was the way I was living. The second time around, life had come to me, and I was taking life as it came. I was relaxed in the ring. I said to myself, *Nothing is going to happen to me that I haven't prepared for.*

THE RING: How would you compare the top fighters you fought during your first career—Ali, Joe Frazier, Ken Norton, Ron Lyle—with the top fighters you fought in your second career, such as Evander Holyfield and Michael Moorer?

GF: I can't compare them, but they're all in the same group, no doubt. They are from different eras, but offered an equal challenge. I can tell you that I was just as nervous and excited before the Michael Moorer fight as I was when I fought Joe Frazier. That tells you more about what goes on inside than what goes on on the outside.

THE RING: Do you ever watch the tape of your fight with Lyle and wonder how you survived and managed to win?

GF: *(chuckles)* Yeah, it's one of those fights I really don't like looking at. But after I lost to Ali in Africa, and I had told all the people some of the complaints and excuses, and there I was on the canvas in Las Vegas, and Ron Lyle was looking over me. Right then, I said, *You know what? This time, if I get counted out, I'm going to have to be dead!* That's the kind of decision you have to make when you're in a fight like that, and I had never made that kind of decision before in my life. But I just wouldn't have been able to live through all the people saying I didn't have stamina, I didn't have this, I didn't have that. I just couldn't live through that again, so I made that vow to die *(chuckles)*. So that's what keeps you going and brings you through. So when I look at the Lyle fight now, I remember all that and I kind of click it off.

THE RING: Does it ever seem like it's somebody else in there when you watch one of your old fights?

GF: Yeah, the Lyle fight especially. But I can remember that moment in my life when I made that vow to die. And boxing is a game. You know what I mean?

THE RING: A very dangerous game.

GF: But when you make a vow on something like that, on a game, sometimes when I look back at it, it comes back to me why I kept getting up and what was going on. Then, I click it off. *(chuckles)* Because that was boyish, you know.

THE RING: True, but didn't it also take away some of the bad taste left over from the Ali loss?

GF: Inside of me it did, because I would wake up in the night, after the Ali fight, and I'd see that guy counting, and I'd jump up. But the fight was always over.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Super salesman Foreman demonstrates his Lean, Mean, Fat-Reducing Grilling Machine, a cooking product that has sold more than 40 million units and helped make him the richest boxer in history.

THE RING: At the time you were critical of referee Zack Clayton, and claimed he gave you a quick count. Looking back, was that just an excuse or do you still think Clayton might have counted a bit too quickly?

GF: I'd never lost before. That was an advantage Ali had over me; he'd lost before. He'd been beaten a couple of times as a pro. I had never lost. So when you lose, you've gotta think of *everything*. But the one thing I couldn't calculate away was that there I was on the canvas. There *I* am. It wasn't Ali on the canvas. It was me. I shouldn't have been down. I lost that boxing match. I had to admit that, but it took a while. When I was contemplating on what happened, I tried to blame everybody. I would have blamed *you*, if I'd have seen you *(laughs)*.

THE RING: Your first appearance

Foreman frequently seems at odds with his HBO broadcast partners Jim Lampley and Larry Merchant. But according to Big George, they're all friends and the on-air bickering is part of what makes participating in the show so much fun.

after the loss to Ali was the exhibition in Toronto when you fought five guys in one afternoon. Was that something you did to rebuild your confidence, or was it just a stunt to put your name back in the headlines?

GF: Both. It was going to be a stunt, but I had to prove to myself that there wasn't anything wrong with me in Africa. I was tired over there. I'd never been tired like that in a fight. I was going to show everybody that George Foreman can go in with five difference guys. I remember getting in the ring with one guy from Chicago (Alonzo Johnson), and saying, "Easy, man. This is an exhibition." He started hitting me in the side, and I said, *You know what? I gotta fight these guys.* Everybody turned on me. Boone Kirkman hit me in the side, and I could feel my rib crack. That's when I really got worried. That was something. I thought I might have bitten off more than I could chew. They tricked me. I thought we were all friends. The good thing about it was that Mac Foster pulled out at the last moment. That was the best thing that happened to me.

THE RING: There's a generation of young people who have seen you on television with your grill or whatever product you're endorsing, and many of them don't realize you used to be the heavyweight champion.

GF: I've had them walk up with their parents. And the dad will say, "Tell 'em George, tell 'em you're a boxer and used to be the heavyweight champ." Then the kids say, "No you weren't, no you weren't." And I can't convince 'em. And kids walk up to me when I'm going down the street. They point and say, "That's the cooking man!" I've had standing ovations going in to speak at different places, and I'm thinking that they remember how I got up off the canvas or something. But they say, "Congratulations on the grill, George." *(laughs)*

THE RING: Is it safe to assume that you've made more money endorsing products than you have fighting?

GF: Oh yeah, no doubt. But if it hadn't been for boxing, it wouldn't have happened. If I try to take boxing out of the equation, I wouldn't have made a dime.

THE RING: Be honest; how often do you use the George Foreman grill?

GF: I've got one right here on my counter. I never go anywhere without the grill. It's the only thing I cook on.

THE RING: Has it helped keep your weight down?

GF: It helps me a lot. There are some occasions when you travel a lot, and you eat, and you can't get to a gym. Then all of a sudden, you've got 15 pounds on you. Your knees and your back start feeling it. Then it's back to the grill.

THE RING: How did the whole grill thing come about?

GF: The grill had been around for a long time. Nobody wanted it. It was just an item that someone had invented, and it sat there. I was doing a lot of commercials, all kind of commercials. Finally,

Henry, my friend, came to me and said George is making all these other products famous and all these other people rich. Why doesn't he get his own product? I said to my attorney, "Okay, how much are they gonna pay me?" He said, "No, no, no. They're going to give it to you. It's yours. We'll find some people to help you market it." I put my name on it. I started using it. We made it a little prettier, designed different colors and added that drip tray. I did infomercials. Before you knew it, this thing jumped off, and over 40 million of them sold. *Over* 40 million. The word of mouth got around. That's what happened.

THE RING: So do you pack one in your suitcase when you travel?

GF: No. Everywhere you go, somebody has got one.

THE RING: What's it like working with your HBO broadcast partners, Jim Lampley and Larry Merchant?

GF: That's been a great experience. As you know, Jim Lampley is not only a good blow-by-blow man, but this guy is an intellectual, a very smart man. So you get a chance to learn something from him all the time. Larry's a writer, and he looks at things like a writer. And I'm looking at things like a boxer. So I think the combination is the best. I wouldn't work there if they weren't there.

THE RING: Of course, you three don't always agree about what you're seeing in the ring.

GF: Not at all.

THE RING: Do you ever feel they are ganging up on you?

GF: *(chuckles)* You know what? When I was a little boy, all of the kids were in gangs, but I never could join because the gang said I tried to take over. When three or four guys would come to fight, they would say, "George, let us help you." But I'd say, "No. I'll fight 'em." So it's just what I really like to do, anyway, have some guys with different opinions. But I have a lot of fun with them. We're always eating and laughing together, but as soon as we get on the air, boy, the fight is on. Not just in the ring, but outside of the ring too. We can never settle on one thing. Isn't that beautiful? *(big laugh)*

THE RING: When there was a riot at Madison Square Garden following the first Riddick Bowe-Andrew Golota fight, the story was that you had to protect Larry and Lamps from the angry fans.

GF: I think that was a slight exaggeration. But I stood around telling people who were getting ready to fight and throw things, "Don't do it. Change your mind, son. Don't do it." And it made us all a little safer. A lot of guys were doing crazy things and they didn't understand themselves why they were doing them. Maybe looking at me for a moment made them think twice.

THE RING: Do you still have your church in Texas?

GF: Yeah, I'm still a full-time preacher here every Wednesday and Saturday and Sunday night. When I travel and do a fight on Saturday night, I'm always on the red-eye so I'm back for 10 o'clock service.

THE RING: A lot of people would have pushed preaching to the back burner if they were as successful as you.

GF: Oh, no. That's still foremost in my life, and I'm still the best floor mopper and chair duster in the building.

THE RING: Do you prepare a sermon in advance or just speak off the cuff?

GF: Off the cuff, but I write down the basic topic and take it from there.

THE RING: What are you going to talk about at your next sermon?

GF: Next weekend will be about trying to be one person.

THE RING: What do you mean by that?

GF: So many people see George today, and they are nice and courteous. Then they get with their other friends and try to impress them by acting different. The idea is that you can love everybody, but you can't make everybody love you. Trying to be five or six people can really mess you up because it takes so much energy just to be one person. Can you imagine trying to be five or six of them? I'll preach a whole sermon around that.

THE RING: You've been highly successful as a fighter, preacher, TV broadcaster, and salesman. What would you like your lasting legacy to be?

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

"I'm still a full-time preacher ... That's still foremost in my life, and I'm still the best floor mopper and chair duster in the building."

GF: A guy told me the other day that they were writing a story about 50 people who typify what the American Dream is all about. That how I really want to be known. I went to the Olympics in 1968, and I went as an American with no adjectives added, if you know what I mean. I want to be remembered as an American. I want people to say, "Oh, George Foreman the American." That's what I really want. Back at the Olympics, John Carlos and Tommy Smith (United States Olympians who staged a black power demonstration on the medal stand to protest the plight of African-Americans) and all those guys, they all wanted to be just Americans. Just Americans. I don't like anybody putting any adjectives in front of me. I'm just a man, an American man. ■

THE MANIAC FROM MANAGUA

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Mayorga, victory cigar clenched firmly between his teeth, is paraded around the ring after his upset kayo of Vernon Forrest. The new welterweight champion is one of boxing's most colorful personalities—and one its biggest punchers.

Mayorga Lights Up Forrest And Sets The Boxing World On Fire

By Ivan Goldman

Ricardo Mayorga does not see boxing as a sweet science. He does not pace himself. He does not set traps, feint, or analyze his opponent. He just punches like there's no tomorrow. And outside the ring, without even trying, he has mastered the mind game of boxing, pushing all the right buttons to enrage his opponent and bangs holes in his composure. The lanky Mayorga doesn't talk trash, exactly. He just laughs at the guy, needles him creatively, diabolically, and with perfect disregard.

Vernon Forrest, he said casually, will go in seven. Didn't this audacious Third World knave understand that the elite Forrest was ranked as one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world? That he defeated previously unbeaten ring genius Shane Mosley twice in a row?

Get real, the world told "El Matador" Mayorga. You're a nobody from nowhere, a 6-to-1 betting underdog. Sure, give it your best. Then pick yourself up off the canvas, collect your purse, and move on. But Mayorga, 29, had no interest in such opinions. On some level he understood the enormity of the challenge. He just didn't care.

It would be difficult to find a more disciplined fighter than the polished Forrest, an Olympian tactician who has a suitable answer for every style. But after just one round with Mayorga, his strategy was to swing for the bleachers and fight the same crazy, full-speed-ahead fight as his challenger. This is when Forrest discovered that inside those ropes, nobody can out-crazy Mayorga, who comes at his man like a runaway truck, who throws each and every shot with the intention of shattering his target like a cheap pane of glass.

So 2:06 into round three, referee Marty Denkin, making the right call, waved his arms in a signal to the world that the dazed Forrest was no longer welterweight champion.

Moments earlier, Vernon was stretched on the canvas and tangled in the ropes at the same time, trying to figure out how he got there. His right knee was bent at a dangerous angle, the sort of angle you would see on a body that fell off a balcony. He managed to beat the count, but clearing his head was out of the question.

Meanwhile, the ink was barely dry on all the proclamations naming Forrest the 2002 Fighter of the Year. After his first victory over Mosley, Forrest won THE RING championship belt—a belt that now belongs to Mayorga.

"The thing happened so fast," ex-champion Forrest said later, "I didn't really have time to reflect on it."

Forrest, now 35-1 (26) with 1 no-contest, tends to lean on the side of careful. Yet somehow Mayorga drew him into slug city in a contest that was immediately mentioned alongside one of the best abbreviated bouts of all time—Marvelous Marvin Hagler's third-round kayo of Tommy Hearns in 1985.

The new champion, an existential hero who's being compared to the great Roberto Duran, managed to do what everyone before him failed to do—yank "The Viper" out of his

PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/HBO

Previously unbeaten Forrest was taken out of his usual conservative fight plan by Mayorga's wild-swinging attack. As this photograph shows, the super aggressive Nicaraguan has the ability to land punches from highly unorthodox angles.

game plan and then destroy him.

"When you fight a guy who's kind of wild, you gotta let him know early he's gotta respect you," said Forrest, who celebrated his 32nd birthday two weeks after his disaster. "I wanted to show him early he should respect me. But I got caught."

Respect. Over and over, Forrest dwelled on this concept. Respect, or lack of it, is key to Mayorga's success. It's impossible to make him respect you. Not before, during, or after the fight. He is truly and utterly disdainful of the man in front of him. He doesn't care who he is or who he thinks he is. Instead, Mayorga shows the man who *he* is.

Respect? Mayorga respects only the next punch he's going to throw. To Mayorga, opponents are like traffic cones. They might look formidable, but you can run right over them and it won't damage your tires one bit. They're laughable. Forrest was just a "clown," he explained later.

Even before the bout, events seemed to conspire against Forrest's peace of mind. He wanted Grant gloves, Mayorga demanded Reyes, the punchers' glove. Finally they agreed to disagree. Forrest wore Grant, and Mayorga used Reyes.

When the original ring went up at the Pechanga Casino in Temecula, California, Forrest's team discovered it was only 18 square feet. Forrest likes to use the ring Mayorga prefers something more like a closet.

Get them 20 square feet or the deal is off, said Forrest's people. A 20-footer was hastily procured. Finally, somebody on Mayorga's team complained Forrest's groin protector was too high (it was). Eventually the inspectors let it go. But Forrest remained peeved.

Reporters eventually learn that asking Mayorga about such details doesn't get them the kind of answers they seek. He replies in words that don't bear much relation to the question. Or if they do, it's only in some murky, philosophical sense. He's not trying to be difficult. He just has a different way of connecting the dots.

"How did you get inside those long arms of Forrest?" a reporter asked him.

"I'm a winner," he answered.

"Sure, but didn't Forrest hurt you?"

"In my country, women give birth to men," he explained.

Forrest is a formidable puncher. Particularly in round two, he landed some vicious shots. You could see he expected Mayorga to fall—or at least step back to collect himself. The last thing Forrest or anyone else expected was a brutal counterattack, which is Mayorga's automatic response to just about anything an opponent does.

Of course a fighter should try to punish his opponent's aggression. Even a counterpunch that misses can instill caution, perhaps even doubt, in the man who punched first. But sometimes punching back immediately just isn't wise. The angle or the distance isn't there.

Mayorga, marching to a marimba no one else can hear, doesn't concern himself with what might or might not be wise. Instant payback is a part of him. He punches at unexpected times from unexpected angles. Some of those punches are like strange lights in the night sky. You wonder whether you really saw them at all.

But Forrest knew they were real. Duran had hands of stone. Mayorga has hands of iron. He swings them like hammers. Brutal force is his credo.

Most of round one went pretty much as expected. Forrest controlled his challenger with an excellent jab. Mayorga, swinging with bad intentions, was mostly missing

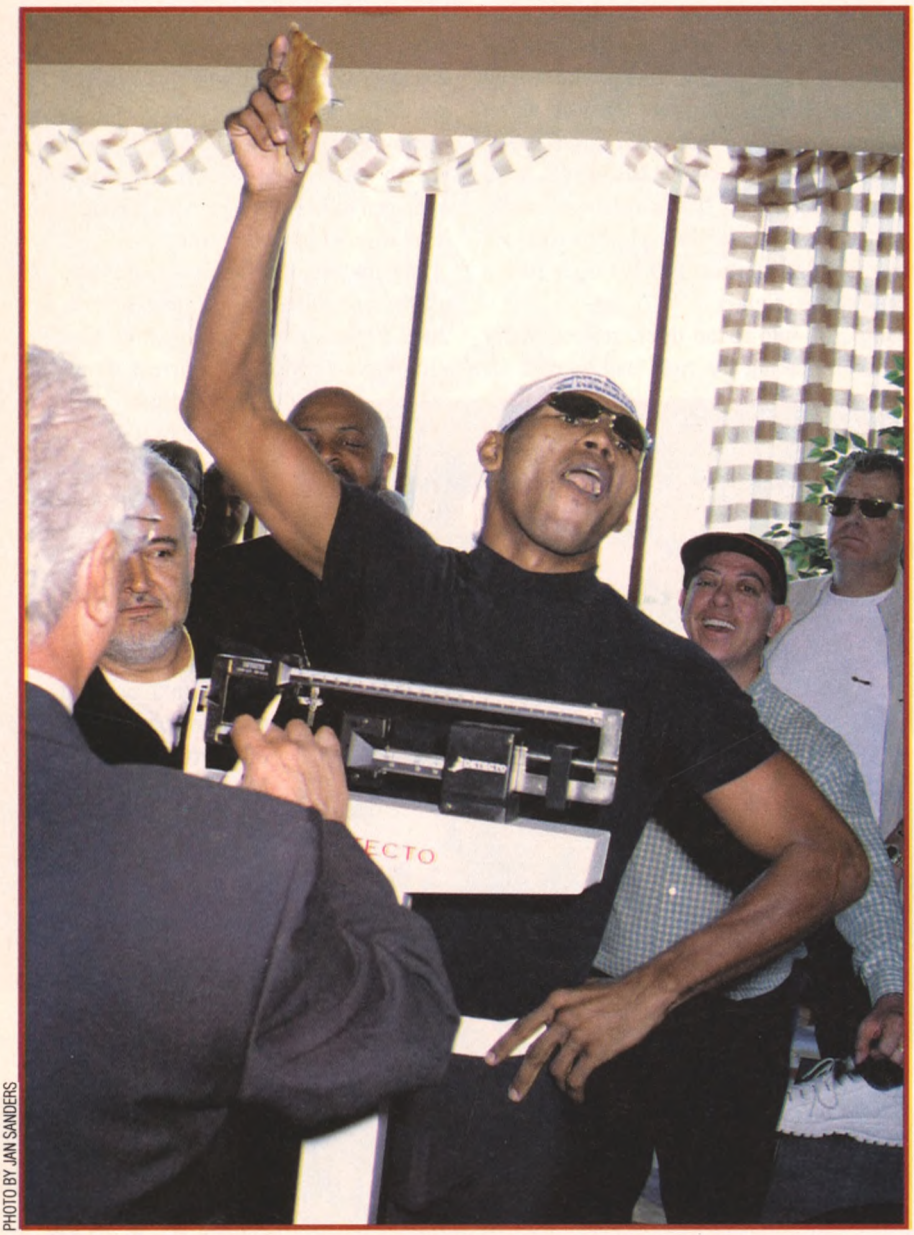


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Mayorga waves a slice of pizza as he weighs in for the Forrest fight. "El Matador" is totally disdainful of his opponents and loves to get under their skin with his outrageous antics. He predicted Forrest would fall in seven rounds, but got the job done in less than half of that.

After being decked in the opening round (above), Forrest came out firing in the second in an attempt to gain Mayorga's respect. He landed some big shots, especially a right uppercut (below) but couldn't floor or hurt his iron-chinned challenger.

After a clinch, Forrest angrily pushed Mayorga into the ropes, earning a caution from Denkin. Shortly before the end of the round, as the two traded along the ropes, Mayorga rang Forrest's bell with a left hook. Then after another left shoved him off-balance a couple of seconds later, the champion sank to one knee and popped up. Denkin correctly ruled it a knockdown. Forrest protested it was a slip.

In round two the champ came out hunting for Mayorga's head. Mayorga took

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PHOTOS BY HOLLY STEIN/HBO

When Forrest continued to trade with Mayorga in the third round, he became the victim of a savage attack, as his adversary unleashed a volley of blows, culminating in a right hand that put the defending champion down and into the ropes.

some brutal shots, while most of his own missed. But he kept coming, and after being tagged with an uppercut that would have knocked down Duran's horse all over again, Mayorga motioned for Forrest to come on in and try it again.

At that point the sellout crowd of 3,000 fell in love with Mayorga. They were already in love with the fight.

Round three was pure fury, with both men trading cannon shots. It was clear this thing could not go 12 rounds. Then Mayorga clubbed Forrest in the temple with a Joe Louis-style short right that sent him straight to the canvas. It ended the fight after just more than eight minutes of action, creating a new star.

There's no buzz in an arena like the buzz after an important, terrific fight that finishes in a huge upset inside the distance. Fans hung around, not wanting to leave.

Mayorga was barely known until last March, when he stopped previously undefeated Andrew "Six Heads" Lewis in round five. Lewis couldn't get any Mayorga respect either.

A Nicaraguan who lives in Costa Rica, Mayorga shot out of the slums of Managua like a rocket-propelled grenade. Now 24-3-1 (22) with 1 no-contest, he exemplifies one of the many great aspects about boxing. Anything can happen, and it can happen fast. He was probably this effective for years, but the world stage failed to notice. It happens.

It's to Forrest's credit that he took the fight. The victory over Lewis gave Mayorga one of the alphabet titles, which meant Forrest could have ducked him forever. One of the worst things about the alphabet belt system is that once a fighter owns a title, he will never get a mandatory challenge from a fighter holding another one of the belts. All the big alphabet gangs drop competing titleholders from their rankings. But Forrest wanted to beat everybody.

Vernon had a rematch clause, and at the postfight press conference he said he wanted another go at Mayorga right away. Don

King, who promotes Mayorga, said his new champion would probably take another bout before facing Forrest again.

"I will be more motivated now," Forrest said. "As an amateur, I lost 16 times. But I also became world champion of the amateurs."

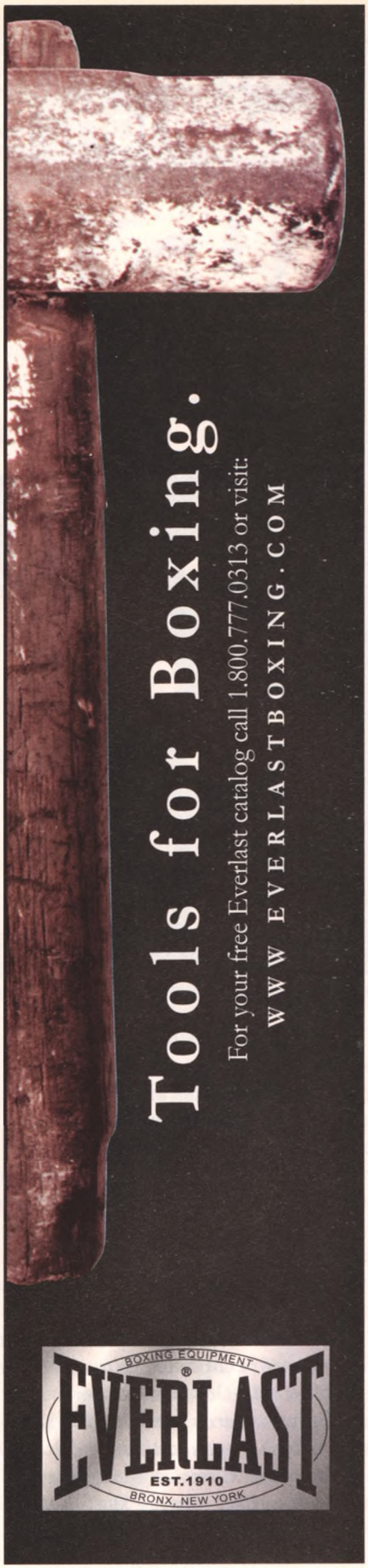
Mayorga smoked two cigarettes during the postfight news conference. His trainer, Hector Perez, said his fighter doesn't smoke in camp, and he no doubt believed that to be the case. But Mayorga might know something Perez doesn't.

Fight fans love warriors like Evander Holyfield, who got a huge ovation when he took a seat in the stands at the Mayorga-Forrest fight. But who wants to hear Holyfield talk? With Mayorga, you get both sides of the equation: a champion who can entertain inside and outside the ring. The only trouble is if you don't speak Spanish, you have to wait for the translation.

The way he fights, it's hard to say how long Mayorga can stay on top. But however long he does, he deserves his new stardom. And you can bet he will enjoy the heck out of it. ■

Ivan Goldman is THE RING'S West Coast correspondent.

Mayorga collects the hardware following his victory over Forrest. As soon as it is manufactured, he'll also have THE RING belt, an indication that he is the true welterweight champion of the world.



Chavez, Pryor, Canzoneri, Benitez ...

KOSTYA TSZYU vs. THE ALL-TIME GREATS

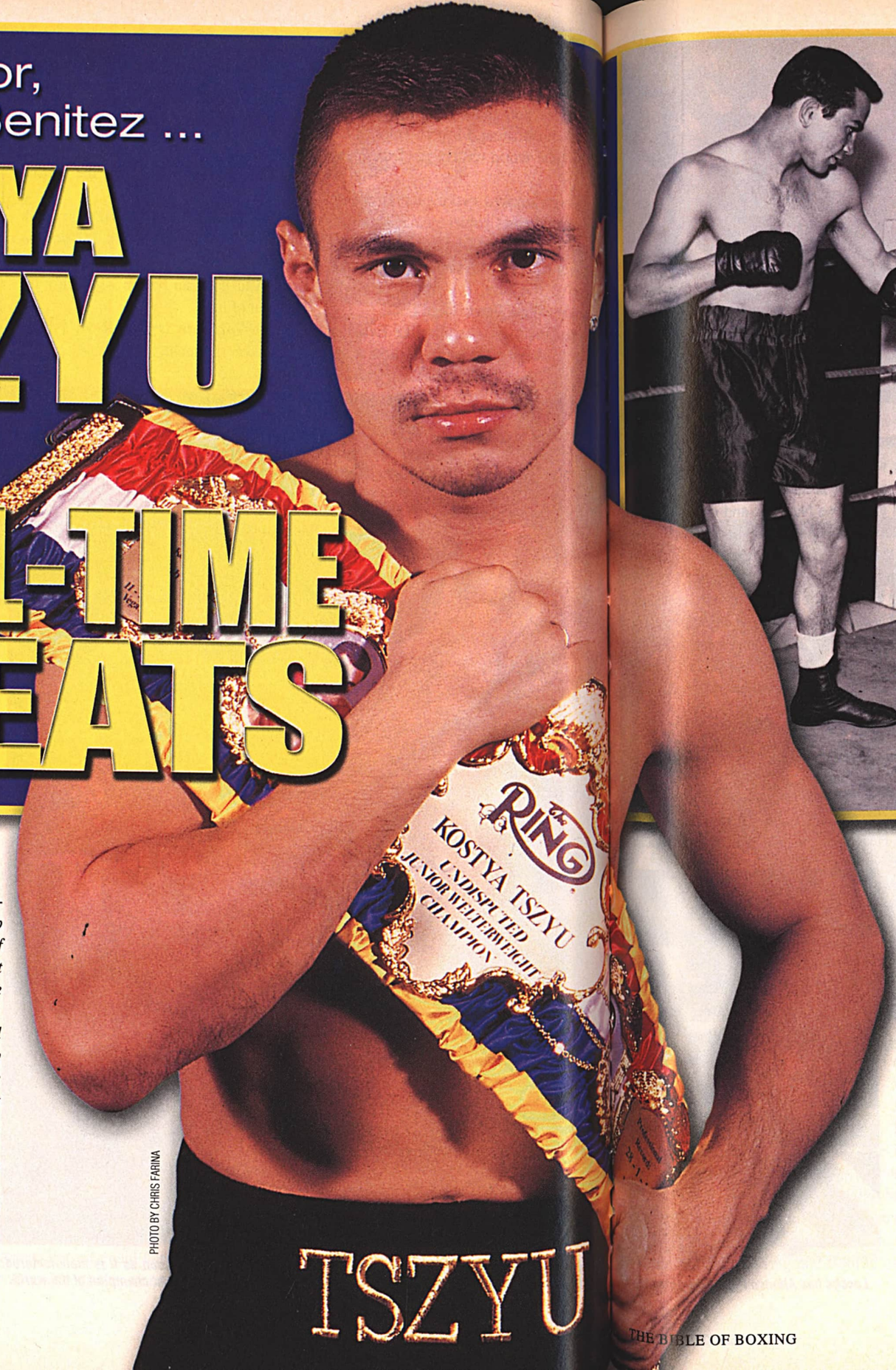


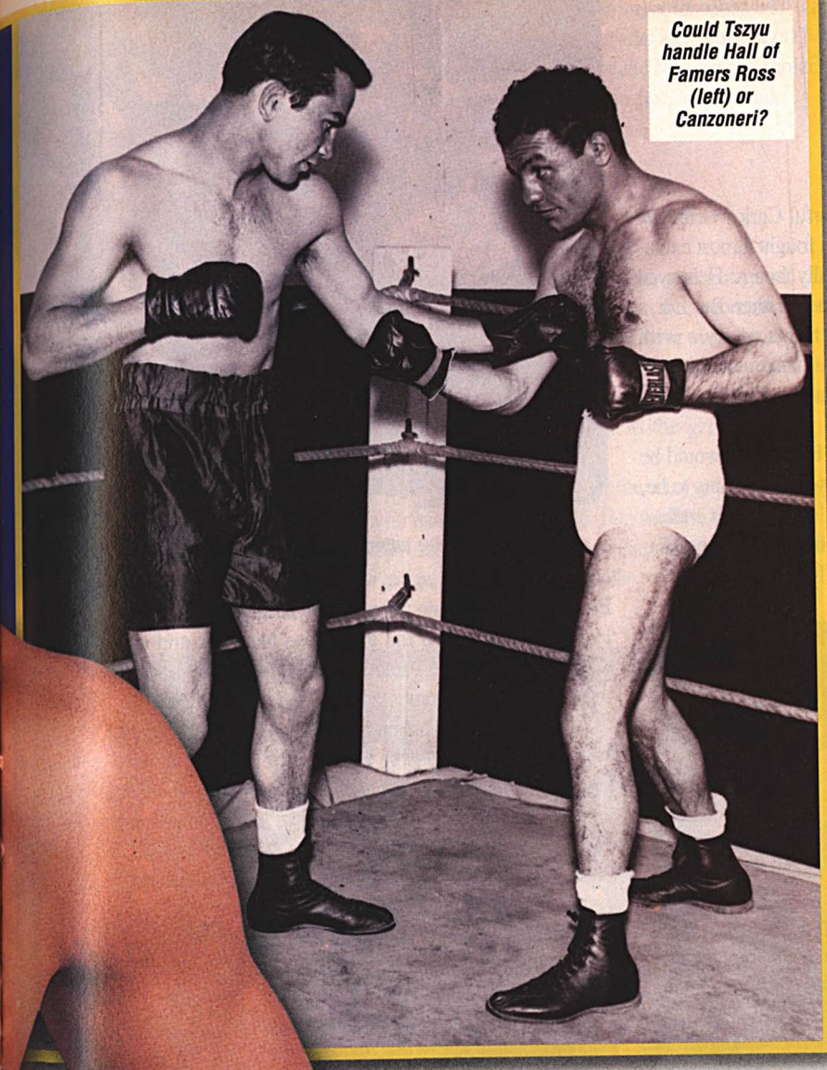
PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

By William Dettloff

World junior welterweight champion Kostya Tszyu kind of snuck up on us. He snuck up on a lot of people. It happens. When we saw him first win the IBF title, way back in 1995 at the expense of poor Jake "The Snake" Rodriguez, he looked like a future star: all right-hand power and tenacity, the pony tail, the polite accent. Two years later, he was still winging that right hand, but it didn't work against Vince Phillips. Goodbye title. Goodbye stardom.

Most of us barely noticed when Tszyu won the WBC 140-pound title in '99 against Miguel Angel Gonzalez. It didn't matter all that much either when he started pocketing title defenses, and we didn't notice right away that he wasn't the same fighter anymore that had lost to Phillips, that he wasn't in a race to land the right hand anymore, that he'd learned patience and practiced a little defense, and that he could box when he wanted to, like he had when he was an international amateur standout. Then he made Sharmba Mitchell quit, and after that he flattened Zab Judah. Then he handcuffed Ben Tackie. His recent win over Jesse James Leija marked his 12th title defense over the two reigns. He is versatile and resolute and solidly in charge of the best division in the sport.

All of that means it's time to consider how Tszyu, 30-1 (24), might fare against the best junior welterweight champions in history. Could he handle Aaron Pryor's tenacity, or Wilfred Benitez' skill? How about Tony Canzoneri's pressure, or Antonio Cervantes' punch? How about the overall brilliance of a prime Julio Cesar Chavez? We know all about these other great junior welterweights. Now we know Tszyu. Let's see what happens when we put them together.



Could Tszyu handle Hall of Famers Ross (left) or Canzoneri?

Tony Canzoneri

137-24-10 (44) with 4 no-decisions
World Champion 1931-'32, 1933

This is an interesting style matchup. Canzoneri was a two-fisted pressure fighter who overwhelmed guys with his durability, his hand speed, and a tireless workrate. He was not a big puncher and he'd be hard-pressed to hurt Tszyu, whose chin is sound. The question is, would Tszyu, who probably would be physically stronger, meet Canzoneri in the middle of the ring, or would he box him, the way he did Ben Tackie? Could Tszyu back Canzoneri up? And what would happen if he couldn't?

Canzoneri was stopped just once in nearly 200 fights—that in his last fight, against murderous-hooking Al "Bummy" Davis. So the bet is that Tszyu wouldn't hurt him sufficiently to back him up and he'd stop trying after the first few rounds, instead opting to box. He'd be fairly successful, but Canzoneri is no Ben Tackie; the guy beat 18 world champions and six Hall of Famers, and he'd beat Tszyu, too, with pressure and non-stop punching. Canzoneri by decision.

Barney Ross

72-4-3 (22) with two no-decisions
World Champion 1933-'35

Ross is an unusual study. Most remember him for the beating Henry Armstrong gave him, but Ross was at the end of the line by then. He holds two wins over Canzoneri, but most accounts of their fights that you can find say they both were bum decisions. That he whipped Jimmy McLarnin two out of three says good things about him, as does the fact that he never was stopped even though he fought the best 135-to-147-pounders of his era.

Ross was no big puncher, but a master boxer who did everything well. And he couldn't be discouraged. His troubles with Canzoneri and to a lesser degree with Armstrong suggest that he could be outmuscled and outworked, but the year before the loss to Armstrong he decisioned the bigger, stronger, harder-hitting

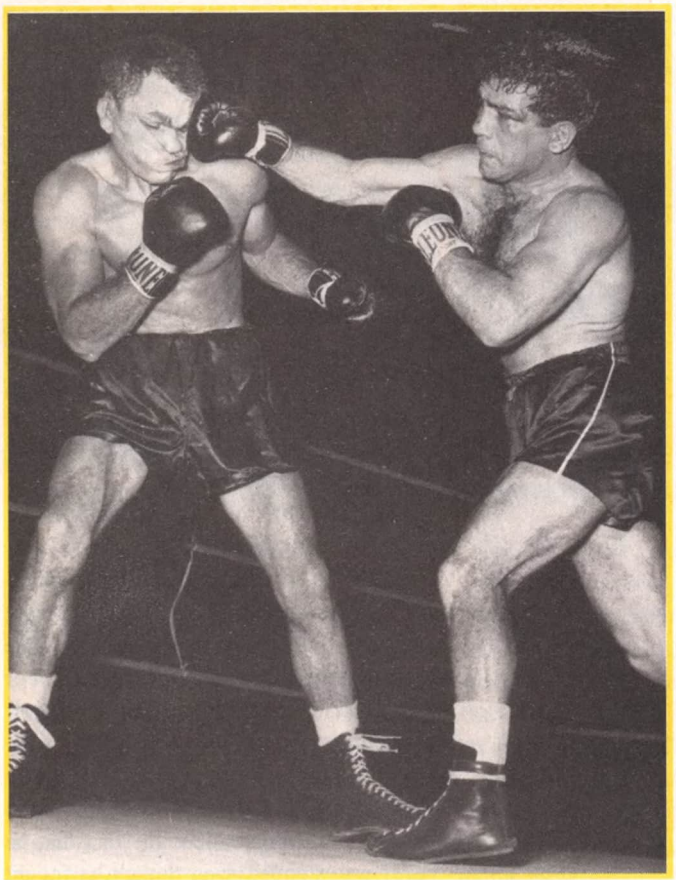
Ceferino Garcia, with a broken left hand no less. The sense here is that Ross would do what he had to do to keep Tszyu at the end of the jab and get enough done to take a close decision.

Duilio Loi

115-3-8 (25)
World Champion 1960-'62, 1962

If it weren't for the two wins over the wonderful Carlos Ortiz, we might expect Tszyu to roll over Loi. After all, Loi fought almost exclusively in Europe, and we all know what that usually means: He stayed there for a reason, and it had nothing to do with the weather. But Loi, a squat, tireless, whirlwind puncher on par in terms of style with Canzoneri, twice decisioned Ortiz—the first by a narrow margin, the second more convincingly. And by most accounts, Loi deserved the decision when he lost to Ortiz in their first fight.

Still, Loi's style was what it was, and Tszyu's best option would be to box. Fortunately for Tszyu, he is a fine boxer when he wants to be, something Loi would discover fairly early on. He'd stifle Loi's endless charges with a stiff jab and run him into hooks and uppercuts frequently enough to take a unanimous decision in a hard-fought battle.

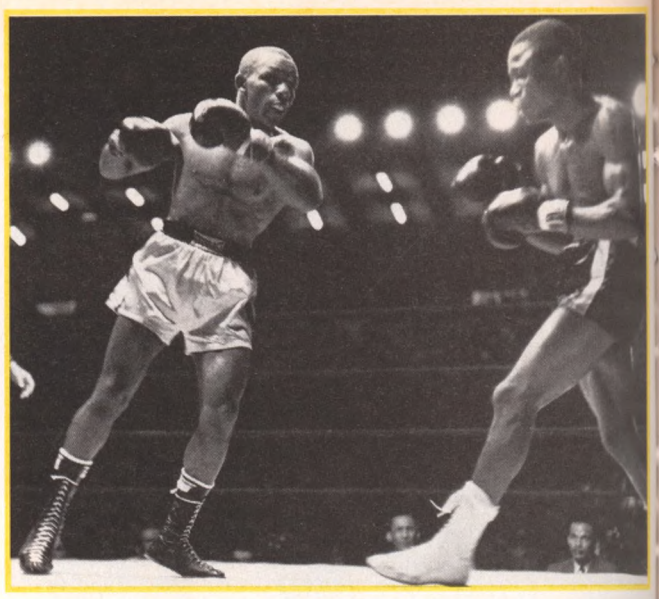


Loi takes the title from Ortiz

Eddie Perkins

74-20-3 (20) with 1 no-contest
World Champion 1962, 1963-'65

If you say nothing else about Tszyu, you must say he is consistent. He is deliberate and methodical and determined, and the case can be made that a fighter who is less than consistent would be almost certain to bow to his greater strength. Perkins was less than consistent. He



Perkins outpoints challenger Bunny Grant

could be excellent, as he was while beating Clyde Gray and Angel Espada and Armando Muniz. But he faltered: a title loss to Carlos Hernandez, a loss to the great Jose Napoles, and one to Nicolino Locche. He went 1-1-1 in three bouts with Duilio Loi, and he split two fights with Bunny Grant. At the very top level, Perkins struggled.

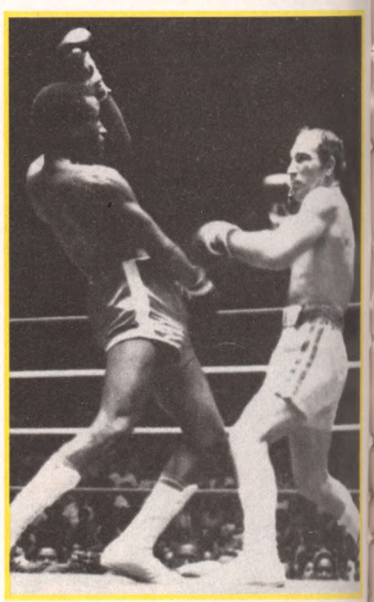
A lanky counterpuncher, Perkins would struggle against Tszyu. Not a big enough hitter to keep Tszyu off of him and just shy of being the kind of skilled technician that could outbox him, he'd find himself outgunned. Perkins was stopped just once in his long career, so he'd last the distance, but it wouldn't be pretty. It would look, in fact, a lot like Perkins' loss to Loi in their final fight. Tszyu by comfortable decision.

Nicolino Locche

117-4-14 (14) with 1 no-contest
World Champion 1968-'72

The first thing that jumps out at you when you see Locche's record is that he scored just 14 knockouts in 136 fights. Clearly, power wasn't his game—defense was. He was a brilliant technician, which is why "El Intocable" (The Untouchable) will be inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame this year. In educated circles, he's considered the Argentine Willie Pep, and praise doesn't come higher than that.

That said, Locche, who fought almost exclusively in Argentina against a lot of guys you've never heard of, would have trouble with Tszyu. It's great to make a guy miss all night, but unless you have something to keep him honest—especially a guy like Tszyu—you're going to have trou-



Locche has Alfonso Frazer off-balance

e. You have to assume that most of the guys Locche whipped were stronger than he was, at Tszyu is unusually strong while at the same time well schooled in the fundamentals. When he wants to fight a smart, tactical fight, he can do it. He'd fight Locche conservatively, ut worrying about getting a knockout, while throwing short, accurate punches, all the while blivious to Locche's soft counters. Tszyu by decision in a snoozer.

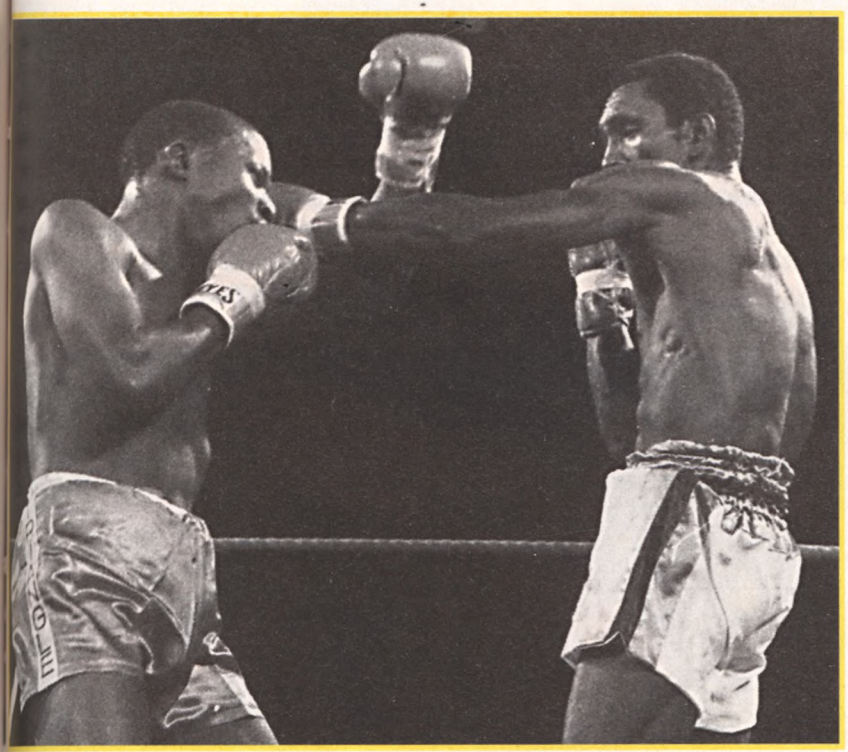
ntonio Cervantes

6-12-1 (37)

BA Titleholder 1972-'76, 1977-'80

It's telling that once Cervantes found out what kind of fighter he was and got good t it, it took Wilfred Benitez and Aaron Pryor—two Hall of Famers—to dethrone him. ervantes lost nine of his first 40 fights before winning the title, and over two reigns e defended 16 times. With sharp skills and a heavy right hand, "Kid Pambele" beat all e very good fighters of his day—Peppermint Frazier (twice), Locche (who also deci- ned Cervantes), Saoul Mamby, Esteban DeJesus—and lost only to the great ones: enitez and Pryor.

The pertinent question might be: Where does Tszyu reside? With the very good guys ervantes beat regularly, or the great ones who handled him? Could Tszyu take Cervantes' ower and stop him, like Pryor did? Could he outbox him, as Benitez did? Tszyu isn't the ter Pryor was or the boxer Benitez was. That means he loses, probably over the distance. ervantes by comfortable decision.



Cervantes catches challenger Norman Sekgapane with a jab

Wilfred Benitez

53-8-1 (31)

WBA Titleholder 1976-'77

The overriding question in this one is obvious: Could Tszyu consistently catch Benitez on the chin? That's what it comes down to. If we decide that he could, the pick would have to be Tszyu by kayo because Benitez, for all his other-worldly tal- ent, had the chin of an accountant. If you could reach him, you could hurt him. Sugar Ray Leonard hurt Benitez whenever he grazed him with a punch, and Bruce Curry beat him around the ring and floored him in their first fight (which, oddly, Benitez won by decision).

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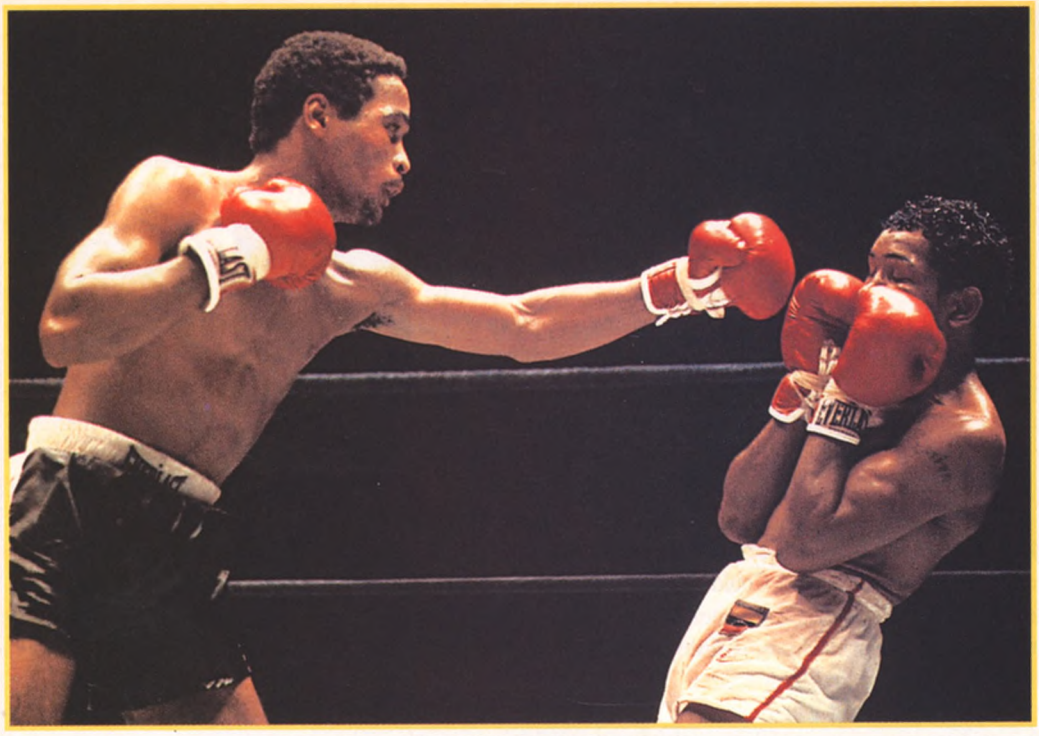


At age 18, Benitez bounces Ray Guerrero

The rub is, it's not a given that Tszyu would reach Benitez. Fighters nearly as good as Tszyu or better—Antonio Cervantes, Carlos Palomino, Roberto Duran—couldn't touch him when each dropped decisions to him. When he was on and in shape—a rarity, unfortunately—Benitez was a genius, and not just defensively. He was a brilliant counterpuncher and an underrated hitter, especially at 140. Would Tszyu's rugged-

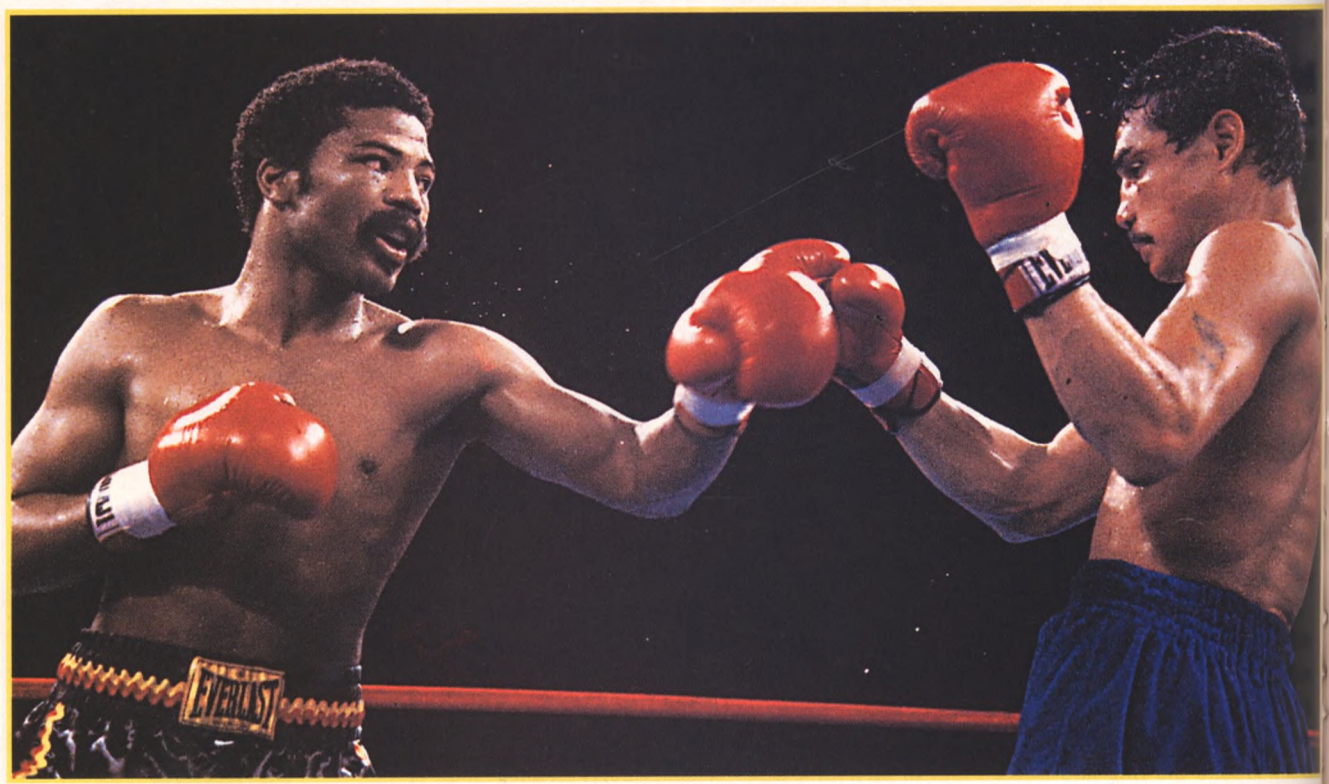
ness and short, hard punche
be enough to overcom
Benitez' superior gifts
Probably not. It's a toug
call, but on his best nigh
Benitez boxes and counter
his way to a clear decisio
win.

Aaron Pryor

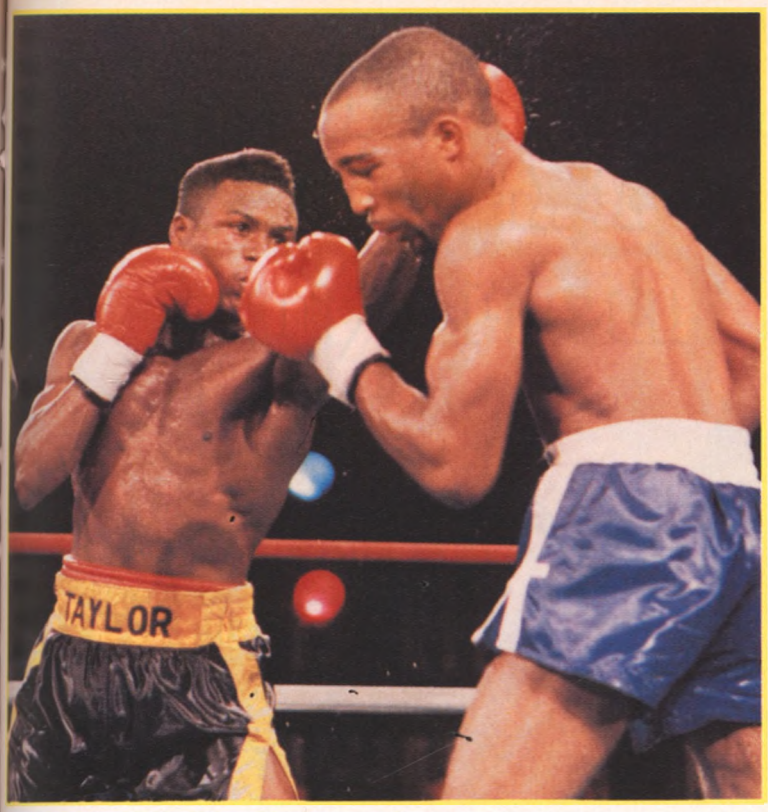
39-1 (35)
WBA Titleholder 1980-'83
IBF Titleholder 1984-'85

The thing that drove most o
us crazy about Pryor's win
over Alexis Arguello was th
chin Pryor showed. He at
some huge right hands fro
Arguello and never was ser
ously hurt. It made us thin
something was up becaus
Pryor liked to go down early
fights. Antonio Cervante
floored him. So did Dujua
Johnson. It looked like if you could get to Pryor early with a clea
shot, you could hurt him. Surely a puncher like Arguello woul
get to him.

Arguello never could hurt him though, and it was because whe
Pryor went down it was because he got ahead of himself or wa
off-balance—not because he had a bad chin. He had an excelle
chin, and that's one reason he'd beat Tszyu—Tszyu wouldn't b



Prime Pryor overwhelms Arguello



Taylor whips Buddy McGirt for the IBF belt

able to hurt him. Another is that Pryor was an exceptionally strong 140-pounder, as Tszyu is, and he was much faster, with both his feet and his hands. Though one can easily envision Pryor taking a couple of early trips to the canvas, his speed, heavy hands, and frenetic style and workrate would overcome Tszyu's superior fundamentals and strength. In a wild one, Pryor by kayo in 10.

Meldrick Taylor

38-8-1 (20)
IBF Titleholder 1988-'90

Poor Taylor. All anyone remembers is the Chavez fight: Ahead on points, the fight almost over, Taylor stands still too long, eats a right hand, and goes down. He gets up wobbly, and Richard Steele stops it with two seconds left. It's a shame. He was so close. But it highlighted Taylor's weaknesses: Too often he stood still too long; he forgot about defense; when that happened, his chin went up in the air and all that good speed of his was useless; he ate a lot of punches for a guy who was so fast. That's why his face was a mess even though he led Chavez on points. It's also one of the reasons why by the end of 1992 he was a shot fighter.

Taylor would easily defeat the pre-Vince Phillips version of Tszyu. Taylor was too sharp and too fast to get whipped by a guy who just threw right hands all night, even a very good one like Tszyu. But we're not talking about that Tszyu. We're talking about the post-Phillips version of Tszyu, who is patient and knows how to wear a fighter down, break him apart little by little and then overwhelm him. It's a very interesting fight, and you could see Tszyu stopping Taylor late, the way Chavez did. But if on the best night of his life Taylor could beat Chavez for 11¾ rounds, you have to figure he could handle Tszyu for all 12. Taylor by close, unanimous decision.

Julio Cesar Chavez

104-5-2 (85)
WBC Titleholder 1989-'94, 1994-'96
IBF Titleholder 1990-'91

This probably goes without saying, but we'll say it anyway: For all it's worth, you can throw out that horrid six-round knockout loss Chavez suffered to Tszyu in 2000. Chavez was 38 years old and a full decade past his best form. That he was able to land as much as he did in the early rounds was an accomplishment in itself.

You knew what you were getting with prime Chavez: pressure, heavy hands, uncannily accurate combinations, an underrated defense, and arguably the best chin in the business. The questions, then, are these: Could Tszyu outpunch Chavez? And if he couldn't outpunch him, could he outbox him? The answer to both is no. Tszyu wouldn't hurt Chavez if Edwin Rosario and Roger Mayweather couldn't; both were bigger punchers. And he couldn't outbox Chavez for 12 rounds if Hector Camacho and Meldrick Taylor couldn't; both were faster. "The Lion Of Culiacan" was nearly as strong as Tszyu and a much better all-around fighter. Chavez by late-round knockout, and it wouldn't be that tough. ■

Chavez cracks Greg Haugen with a left

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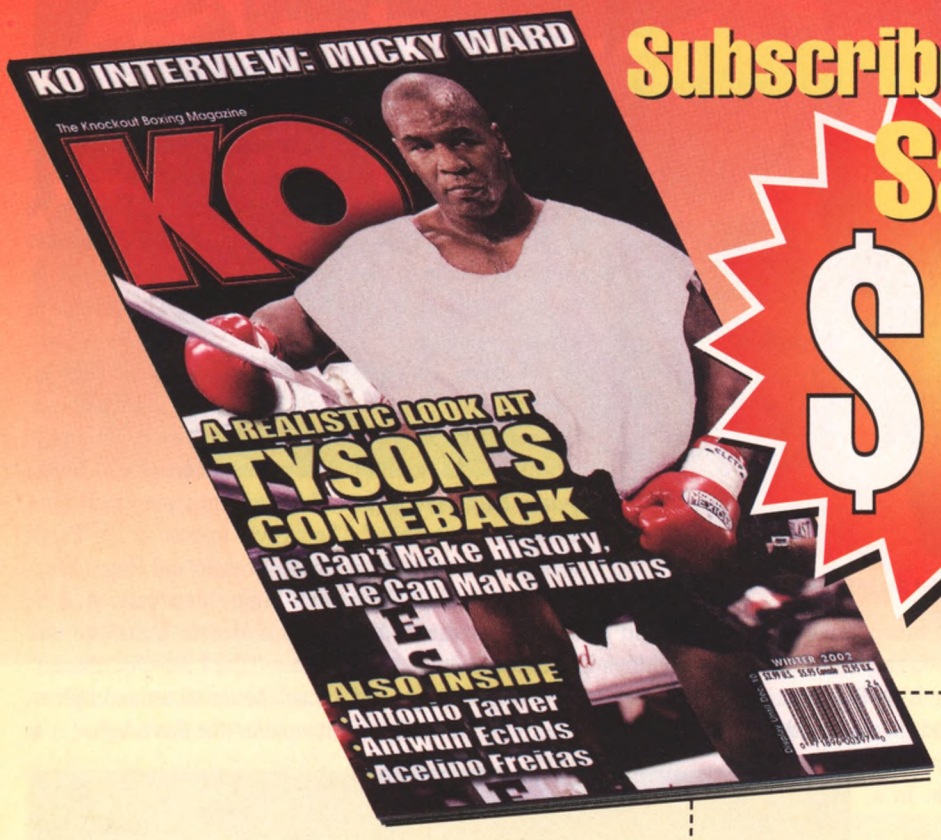

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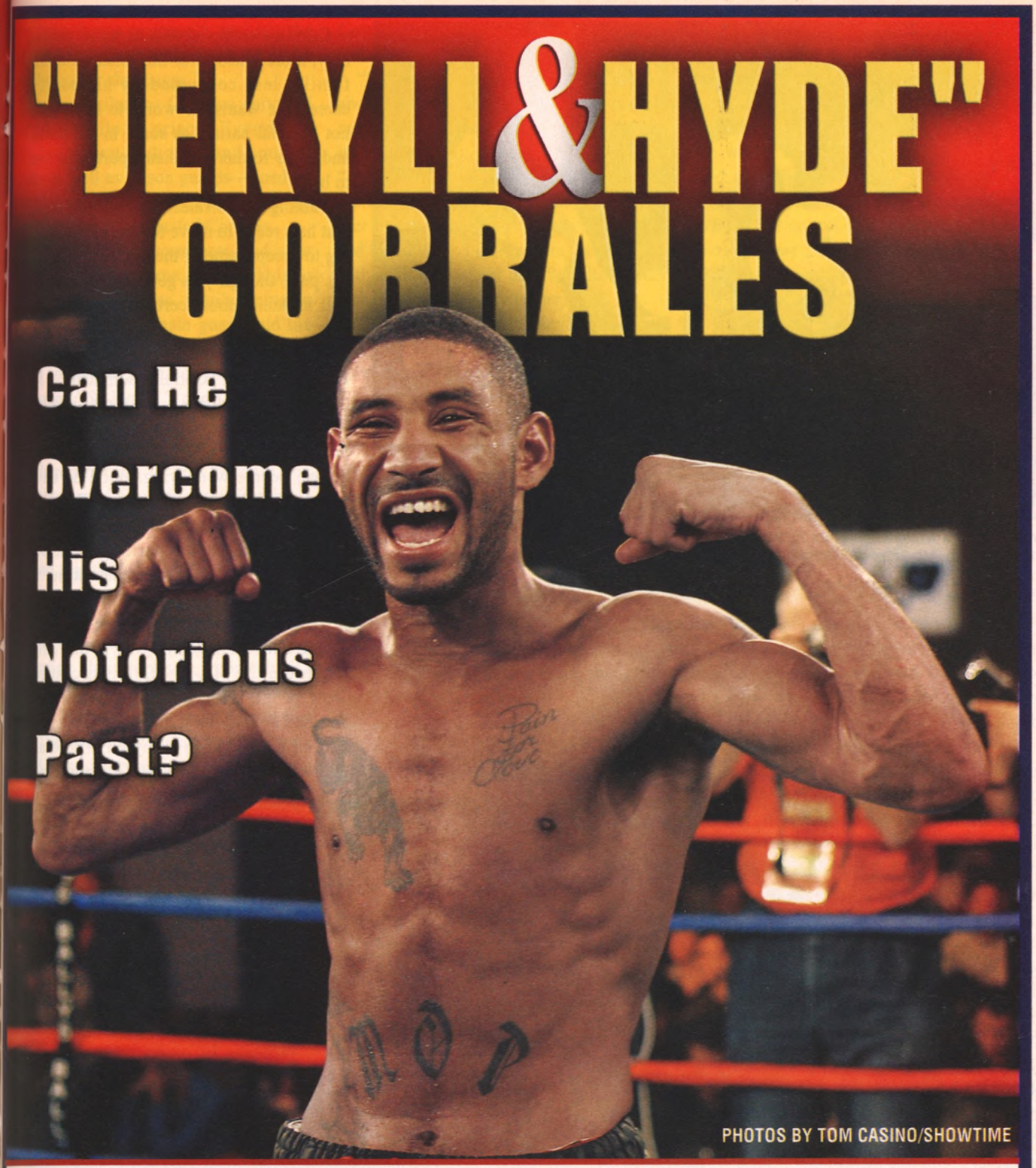
"JEKYLL & HYDE" CORRALES

Can He Overcome His Notorious Past?



PHOTOS BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

By **Joe Santoliquito**

Diego "Chico" Corrales didn't need to hear the metallic slam of cell doors locking behind him to absorb the enormity of his situation. The former junior lightweight titlist came to understand his reality with one simple word: No. That's what the judge told Corrales when he asked if he could give his wife and daughter a kiss before beginning his two-year sentence for felony abuse of his previous wife.

Moments later, another layer of reality slammed Corrales right in the face. A guard asked the boxing star to turn around and put his hands behind his back and—*click*—on went the handcuffs.

Corrales' mind began to race. Everything was exaggerated. Boxing suddenly spun off into a different orbit, as his wife's face grew sadder and the tears coming from his daughter's eyes looked as big as golf balls.

Corrales made a triumphant return to the ring after a two-year layoff by punishing journeyman Michael Davis in late-January. "Chico" won with a convincing a fifth-round stoppage.

"When I was getting ready to turn myself in, I was fine at first," recalled Corrales, as his otherwise perpetual smile momentarily left his face. "But from the moment of not being able to give my wife and daughter a hug and kiss, and seeing my daughter there in tears, which was one of the hardest things to see, I knew I hit the bottom. Reality set in right there."

Corrales trip to the bottom began on May 4, 2001, when he was sentenced to two years after facing charges that he had beaten his 98-pound pregnant wife, Maria. He made a plea-bargain deal in order to avoid more serious charges, served 14 months, and was released on June 2, 2002. That much is fact. How guilty Corrales was depends on whom you believe.

Now that Corrales has returned to the ring, he plans on taking out the frustration that built up during his incarceration on his opponents. He began the process against overmatched journeyman Michael Davis in late-January, tallying an emphatic fifth-round stoppage at Bally's Casino in Atlantic City.

Corrales has endured more drama than you'll see in a week of watching soap operas. Through it all, he's found out just how unbreakable he is. He was repeatedly knocked down by Floyd Mayweather when they fought on January 20, 2001, and he kept getting back up. At the same time, Corrales was getting knocked down outside of the ropes on the spousal abuse charges.

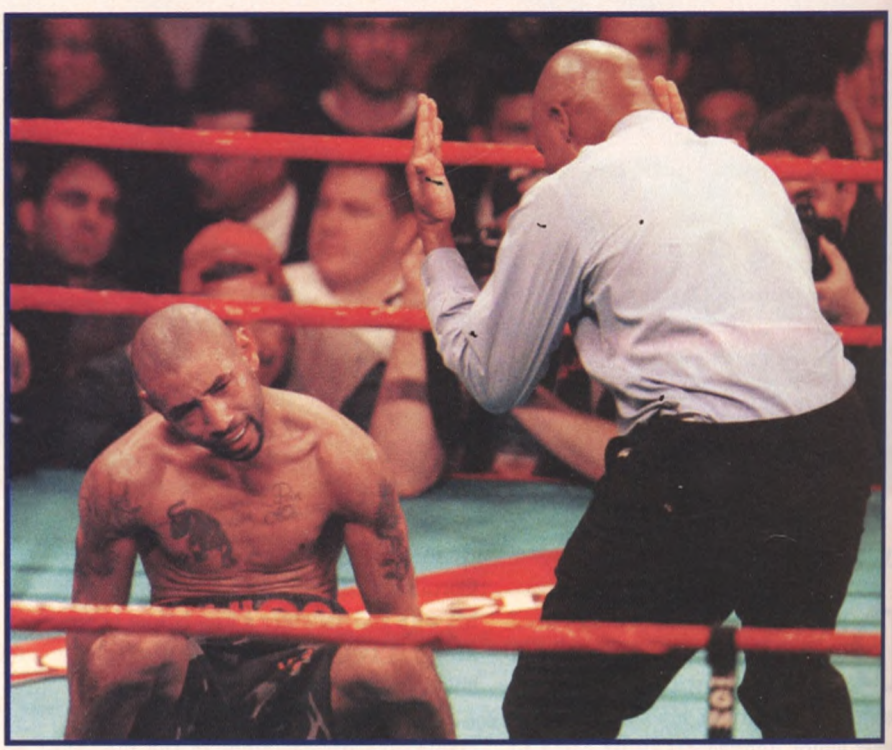
In the end, he capitulated in both instances. Against Mayweather, he suffered his first pro loss, stopped in the 10th round after suffering five knockdowns. Then Corrales lost his freedom when he was sentenced in May '01.

Corrales comes across as more patient now, more tuned in to the concerns of his family, less consumed by his boxing career. He wants the world to know he's not a social pariah, as some in the media and some former associates portrayed him to be.

Talking to Corrales, you get the sense that he's ready to move forward. He's willing to accept some of the responsibility for his past, though you get the feeling he's still in denial about certain aspects of his case.

"I actually let everything happen to me, I let it transpire," Corrales admitted. "I let the situation escalate. A lot of my situation is a bunch of bull. The majority of it is a bunch of bull, really. People were adding things; people were lying. But I do have some responsibility. For something to become a bigger thing, you have to take a part, and I had some participation, but nowhere near what people made it out to be.

"The demon people see in me and what people think of me comes out in that ring. I've had a life of trials. Life is decent for some people and brutal for the rest, and I've had a pretty messed-up life. There are a lot of things I keep to myself. Those are things that are just between God and me. I



Corrales showed true grit in picking himself up off the canvas five times against Floyd Mayweather in January 2001. Corrales lost the fight via 10th-round stoppage, at around the same time he was facing spousal abuse charges from his ex-wife Maria.

keep those things to myself, and it's the fuel that I use. I can take it and use it for good things, for challenges."

Like the challenges Corrales survived every day while in prison. Everybody knew his boxing pedigree, and some—inmates as well as prison guards—lined up to test his mental mettle. Coping with the experience actually annealed Corrales.

"I heard jacked-up comments, and a lot of people confronted me, from guards to inmates," said Corrales, who's living in Las Vegas. "Some female guard told me 'You think you're hot s___, because you're some star fighter, but you ain't s___ to me.' So I said, 'I don't have to be. If I ain't s___ to you, then why do you know so much about my career? I must be more than a nobody to you, because you know about me.' She got upset. But that's the kind of stuff I heard on a regular basis for 14 months.

"I had my fair share of physical confrontations in there, too. You have to understand that prison is a world of its own, and there's no real way of explaining it. That first night in prison, I don't think I slept at all. I remember I sat around thinking a lot. It's hard to put your mind in that place. The whole experience changed me a lot, and I know where I stand now. Before, everything else was first. Everything was ahead of my family—my career, my friends, my cars. But when everything came down to it, all I had was my family."

Corrales, 34-1 (28), began his rebirth toward contender status with the off-TV bout against Davis, his first fight since being released from prison. His timing was slightly off, and he took more punches than he should have, but Chico still displayed that devastating power that enamored boxing fans in the first place. He sent the game Davis to the canvas in the first with a hard right to the body, and dropped him again in the third with a crushing left hook to the head.

Getting in the ring eased the tension that had been boiling inside of Corrales since his release. He's rejoined trainer Kenny Adams, with whom he worked in the early stages of his career. Chico has a new promoter in Gary Shaw (replacing Top Rank, with which Corrales had an acrimonious split shortly after his release from prison), and a new manager in James Prince. It's an unusual pairing because Prince was one of Corrales' biggest antagonists when Chico was preparing to fight Mayweather.

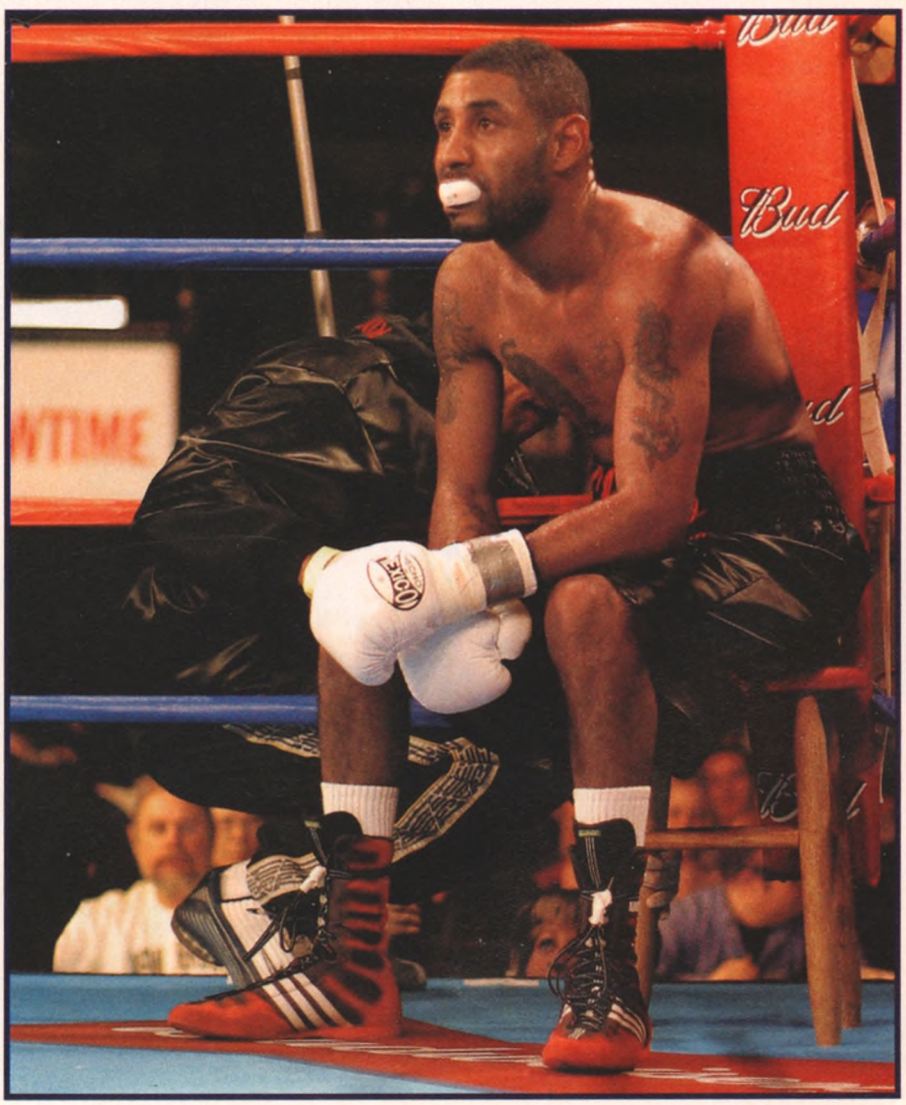
"But there was one thing I really liked about the kid, and that was that he had the heart of a champion," said Prince, who visited Corrales in prison and signed him. "There were a lot of people who told me the kid was bad news, and a lot of his former people said things like he was crazy and they couldn't control him. I feel differently. I think I could deal with him better than his previous management did."

Corrales may have a sanguine disposition, but some claim that's just a smoke screen, and that the smiling, affable Corrales is someone who can turn into a thoroughly unpleasant person in an instant.

"I used to have a great relationship with Diego when I had him," said Corrales' former manager Cameron Dunkin. "Then all of these allegations began to come up, and we found out some other things about Diego, and we spoke about going our separate ways. Then he called me every foul name in the book. It was real Jekyll-Hyde stuff. One moment he's the sweetest kid in the world, and the next, he became real cold and offish. He's like a split personality. He was mean in his eyes, and completely switched on me. I thought to myself: *Is this the same Diego Corrales I've known all of these years, or is what I just saw the real Diego Corrales?"*

Beside a new manager, Corrales also has a new woman in his life: Michelle, his third wife. Michelle was one of the few who consistently visited Corrales when he was incarcerated at the Deuel Vocational Institute in Tracy, California, and she was on the brink of tears watching from ringside as her husband dismantled Davis.

"It's been very hard," Michelle said.



Corrales has been sitting patiently over the last two years. Chico says he's changed from the man he used to be, and his focus has shifted from boxing to his family.

"We've both been very patient and waiting for this day to come. It was easier for me to stick by Diego, when a lot of people turned their backs on him. A lot of people didn't take the time to get to know the details of his case, nor should they have, or could they, because the case was sealed."

Michelle, 31, has been with Corrales for 2½ years, and has actually known him much longer. She was often quizzed as to why she was even with "such a man" like Chico, who had a history of abuse, dating back to a '97 conviction in Las Vegas on a domestic violence charge.

"People that really know Diego know he's a great guy," said Michelle. "All of that bad media that he got was unwarranted. We've known each other for years, and I was right there and saw some things. Sometimes when you're around a negative person it can draw the negative out of another person. Diego didn't have that strength before in his life. With me, I'm a little more grounded, a little more rooted. I'm not 18 or 21, ready to party and take him away from his career. I'm here to push him and make him the best that he can be."

But the Diego that Michelle knows still carries some baggage.

"What's happened has taken a little away from me and taken away from the trust I used to have in people," Corrales said. "I used to feel I could trust everybody and be good toward everybody. I'm not the same Chico I used to be. That's sad, but that's the truth."

Corrales still vehemently denies the charges that he beat his former wife, but said the media tried and convicted him before he ever had his day in court. He said he'd wake up every day to read reports about himself on the Internet.

Yet he made a deal. Wasn't that an admission of guilt?

"No, not really," countered Corrales, who was facing six other charges along with felony spousal abuse. If he had been convicted on all counts, Corrales was facing a prison term of 20 years 8 months. "I wanted my life back," Corrales continued. "I made the plea to get the situation over with, that's why I made the deal. I made a decision for me, but I've always stood by my innocence."

A condition of his plea bargain was that his felony count was not considered a strike under California's "three strikes" law. That meant, with good behavior, he could serve a year of the two-year sentence, then remain on parole until applying for his unconditional release from prison at the end of this year, and then be done with it.

Corrales has permission to travel, under the stipulation that he cannot have any contact with Maria, though he gets visitation rights to their daughter, Sequoia. He also has one son from his first marriage, and is the father to Michelle's two kids.

When Corrales arrived home, he vowed to start working immediately. Boxing was still his refuge. He sparred his second day back. But not everything went well. Socially, Corrales had to take smaller strides.

"It took me a long time to adjust," Corrales said. "For example, I couldn't go to a mall for about four months. I didn't want to be around a whole bunch of people. I couldn't stand it. You didn't have people moving around you like that in prison. But Michelle stayed with me,

Despite showing signs of ring rust, Corrales still displayed his awesome power against Davis. He scored two knockdowns, the first coming from a right hand to the body, and the second one coming from this crushing left hook.

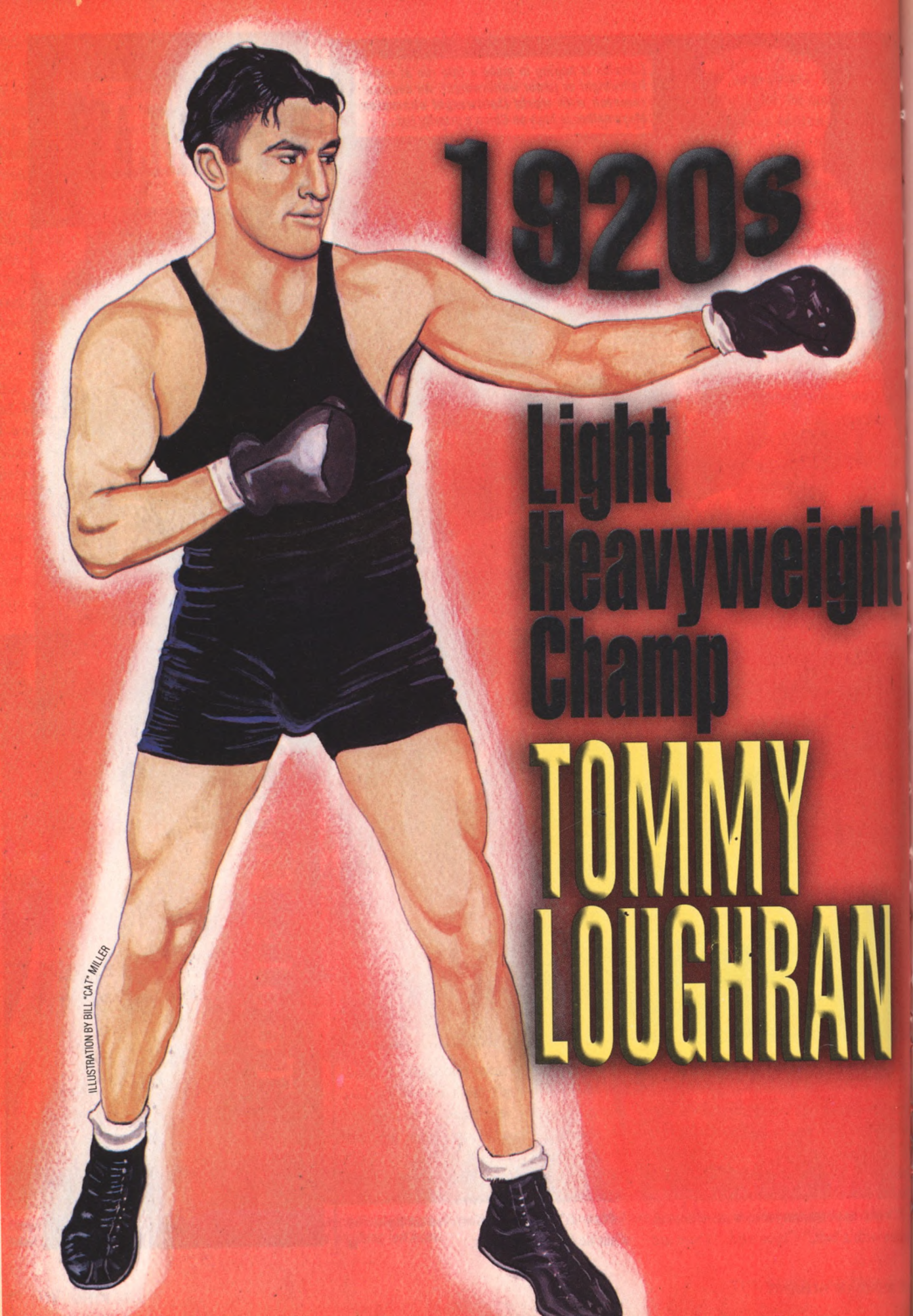
Corrales is hoping to make a title run at either lightweight or junior welterweight. An eventual rematch with world lightweight champion Mayweather is high on Chico's priority list.

she kept pushing me through it."

The next step for Corrales is to start taking on the best lightweights and junior welterweights in the world. He weighed 137 for the Davis fight, but Adams said making 135 shouldn't be a problem for the lean, six-foot-tall knockout machine.

"I want anyone, anyone with a name, anyone with a belt," Chico said. "There are a lot of names in these two divisions, and I'm coming. I don't think I went too far. The last eight months since I was released were beautiful. I'm having a lot of fun, and having a really good time right now. I paid for everything I did. I've paid my dues every week, in every sense."

Now it's time for Corrales to fight for what he believes he lost. ■


1920s
Light Heavyweight Champ
TOMMY LOUGHRAN
ILLUSTRATION BY BILL "CAT" MILLER

The Nicest Guy In Boxing History

By **Pete Ehrmann**

By its very nature, boxing has always attracted more sinners than saints, and the number of truly pure-hearted figures in ring history can probably be counted on Mike Tyson's favorite finger. And he would be Tommy Loughran.

While probably not in the same league as Francis of Assisi or Mother Teresa, the fighter called "Gentleman Tommy" and "The Philadelphia Phantom" was so decent, upstanding, and stout of character that social critic Quentin Reynolds went so far as to call him "the kind of man you'd like your son to be."

To Nat Fleischer, founder of THE RING, Loughran was nothing less than the savior boxing needed at a low point in the sport's history.

"In these days when the fingers of suspicion are cast on almost every fight, and the racketeers, the cheap-skate gamblers, try to pull a great sport down to their own level, it is indeed gratifying to have a Tommy Loughran in the field," Fleischer wrote in 1931. "His popularity will continue to grow regardless of reverses, because in this bright-eyed, gentlemanly, soft-spoken Philadelphian, boxing has a model that the youth of the land could well afford to follow."

Gilding his halo was the fact that Loughran was the best 175-pounder of his era and one of the top light heavyweights in ring history, whose flawless boxing skills even awed such hallowed practitioners of the art as James J. Corbett and Jack Johnson.

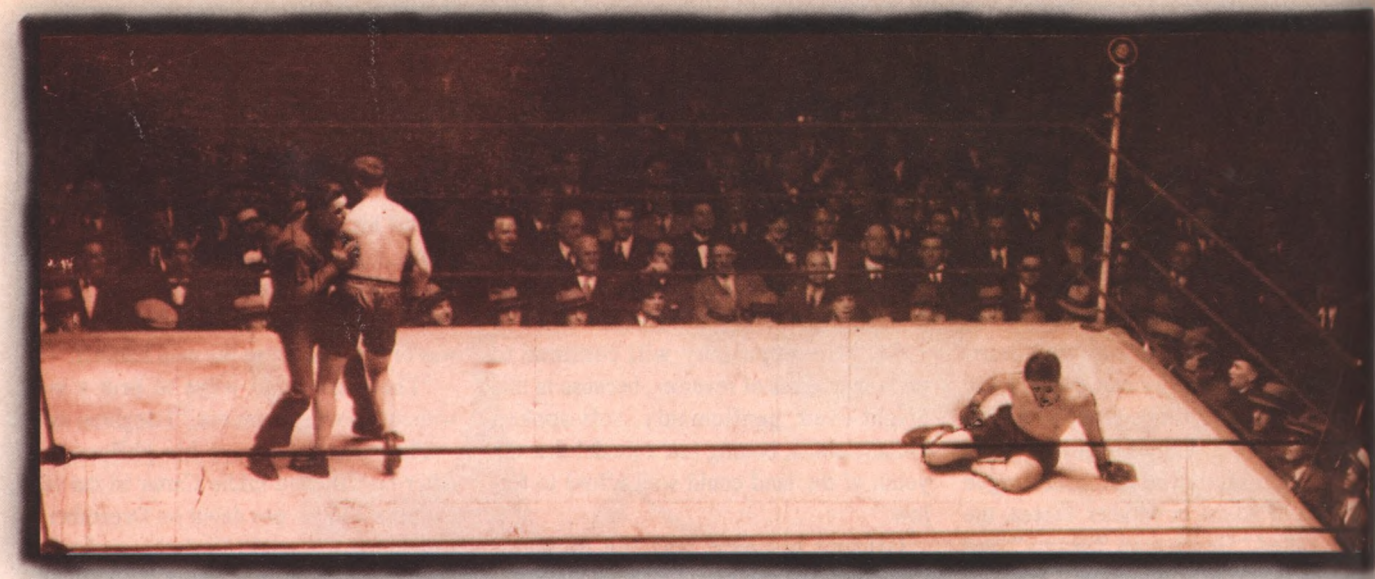
Only one thing kept the ring's holy ghost from across-the-board greatness, a failing that in boxing is considered the most mortal of sins. Loughran couldn't punch hard enough to knock a kindergartner off his roller skates. Only 18 of the 96 men Loughran beat on the record (with 24 losses, nine draws and 46 no-decisions) didn't make it to the final bell. But that was of little matter to the man himself.

"There are other ways to beat a man without knocking him out," Loughran said.

That wasn't always his philosophy. After he flattened Eddie Carter in the second round of his pro debut on December 9, 1919, Loughran kissed the right fist responsible and envisioned it eventually clearing away everything between him and a world title.

But Loughran's manager, Joe Smith, had a different vision—of a right-hand-crazy kid who'd be easy pickings for every left hooker he faced. Smith was a longtime friend and neighbor of the Loughran family to whom Tommy had turned to see about becoming a fighter after watching featherweight champion Johnny Kilbane

Loughran (right) squares off with former light heavyweight champion Mike McTigue prior to their October 1927 bout for the vacant 175-pound crown. Loughran won the title via 15-round decision.



Challenger Leo Lomski put Loughran down in the opening round of their 1928 bout. Loughran beat the count, but was out on his feet for the next five rounds before he regained his wits and boxed his way to a unanimous decision victory.

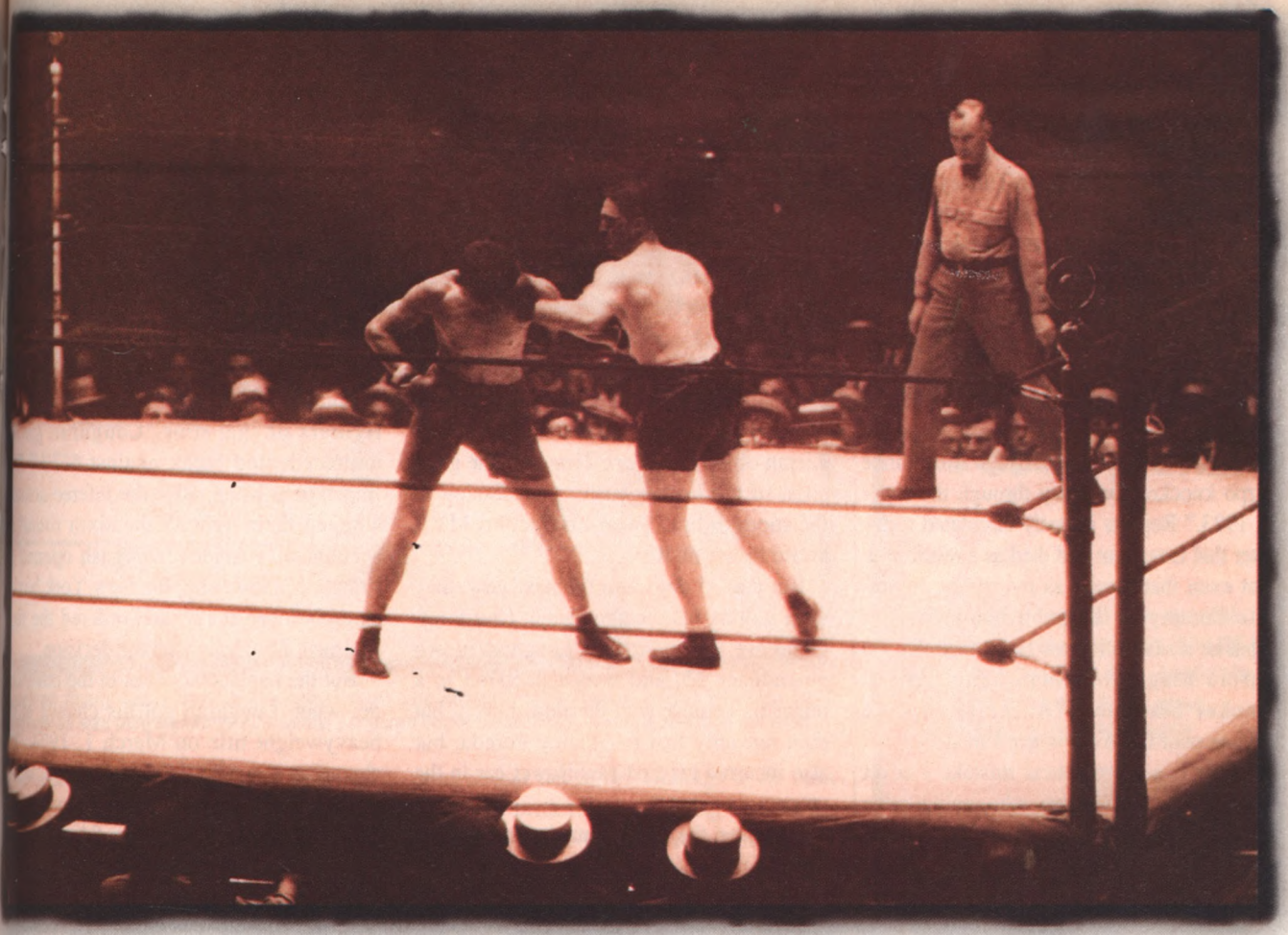
beat Joey Fox in Philly that year. Smith had over 300 fights himself, but you couldn't tell it by the manager's features that remained smooth thanks to his diligence about boxing fundamentals. Smith transferred that diligence to Loughran by means of a rope that kept Tommy's hair-trigger right hand tied to his side in the gym. Forced to punch with his other hand only, the result was the development of what Fleischer would call "as pretty a left, snappy jab as has been seen in years."

Emphasis was placed on learning and utilizing the science of boxing, and out of that grew a famous Loughran dictum: "They have to hit me to hurt me, and they can't hit me."

Gene Tunney did, though, in their eight-round bout in Philly on August 24, 1922. Loughran was just 19 years old, and the future heavyweight champion had 10 pounds on him that felt more like 10,000 when Gene reached him with a right hand in the first round. Loughran went down, but he got up and made such a fight of it that two local newspapers called him the winner of the no-decision match.

For someone who didn't like to get hit, Loughran had no qualms about standing right in the face of danger. He proved that before he ever laced on a boxing glove by lying about his age to join the military during World War I, making it all the way to boot camp before the brass got wise to the 14-year-old and sent him home. Some boxers would probably have preferred going up against the whole Hun army barehanded to

Loughran receives a trophy from THE RING's founder and Editor-in Chief Nat Fleischer. Loughran was the magazine's Fighter of the Year in both 1929 and 1931.



Future world heavyweight champion Jimmy Braddock absorbs a left from Loughran during his bid to take the light heavyweight title away from the Philadelphian. Loughran retained the title with an easy 15-round decision.

fighting Harry Greb in the ring. Loughran not only fought Greb—"the busiest chap I ever met"—six times, but went the distance with him each time, going 1-2-1 with 2 no-decisions.

Two impressive Loughran performances made big news in 1926. On June 17, the idol of Ritan St. won a decision over ex-175-pound champ Georges Carpentier before 30,000 happy fans at Philadelphia's Municipal Stadium, even flooring the Frenchman in the process. Loughran was even more dominant in a public sparring session with Jack Dempsey, then preparing to defend his heavyweight title against Tunney. Newspapermen were agog watching the Loughran jab piston into Dempsey's face.

The popular Loughran could have been declared 175-pound champion without breaking a sweat in 1927, but he opted, like the earnest, by-the-book lad he was, to win it the old-fashioned way. When champion Jack Delaney decided to go heavyweight, the National Boxing Association declared Loughran his successor, only to be told no thanks by its designee. Instead, Loughran fought former champion Mike McTigue on October 7 for New York State recognition, and with the band from Tommy's alma mater, St. Monica's Catholic School, tootling encouragement at Madison Square Garden, Loughran, 24, thoroughly outboxed the 37-year-old McTigue for the decision.

Just two months later, the title was unified in what the *New York Times* called "an excellent exemplification of what the manly art means with the elimination of sluggery and primitive, brute strength." With his victory over NBA titlist Jimmy Slattery at the Garden, the universal champion was hailed as not only the most artistic boxer since Corbett but also, in the words of THE RING, "one of the finest fellows you'd ever want to meet."

Resilient, too. In his first title defense, the sluggery of challenger Leo Lomski resulted in two trips to the canvas for Loughran in the first round and a five-round separation of the champion and his much-admired faculties. Loughran fought on pure instinct, then woke up before the sixth round and went on to outbox Lomski the rest of the way in as stirring a performance as when Archie Moore did virtually the same thing against Yvon Durelle about 40 years later.

Following successful defenses against ex-welterweight champ Pete Latzo (twice) and middleweight champ Mickey Walker, in his swan song as light heavyweight champion Loughran administered both a brilliant boxing lesson to future heavyweight king Jimmy Braddock and also one on manners. After the thoroughly frustrated challenger was reduced to spitting obscenities at him, Loughran stopped punching long enough to ask, "Do you talk like this to your mother? I'm as good as your mother, and don't you use language like that!" The chastened Braddock stopped cursing, and after the fight Loughran stopped being light heavyweight champion to go hunting for the

heavyweight title that had been vacated by Tunney.

In the very first balloting for THE RING'S Fighter of the Year award in 1928 (then called the Most Valuable Boxer award), Loughran was runner-up to Tunney. A year later, Tommy was the winner, which was some consolation after the unthinkable happened and he got knocked out for the first time in over 100 bouts.

The right hand thrown by Jack Sharkey in the third round of their scheduled 15-rounder for the American heavyweight title on September 26, 1929, was called by Fleischer "the most terrific wallop since Firpo knocked Dempsey through the ropes in 1923." Reports actually circulated a day later that Loughran had died as a result of it. But even that wasn't as mortifying to erudite Tommy as the published reports of what he'd said to referee Lou Magnolia just before Magnolia stopped the fight at Yankee Stadium: "Let me sit down a minute until I find out where I'm at."

"That is a grammatical mistake I never make," huffed Loughran, who, unlike other famous fighters, didn't rely on the services of a ghostwriter for the boxing column syndicated in newspapers under his name.

He certainly never would have said, "It ain't over 'til it's over," but that Yogi-ism describes better than any treatise the balance of Loughran's career. Written off after successive losses to heavyweight contender Ernie Schaaf in 1930, the next year Loughran beat Schaaf, Max Baer, Johnny Risko, Paulino Uzcudun, and several others in a comeback acclaimed in these pages as "one of the most remarkable in the realm of boxing." The man called by Fleischer the "Wizard of Boxing," and anointed by John Kieran of the *New York Times* as "the great artist of the leather-pushing profession in the modern era," won his second MVB award from THE RING.

But just 15 days into the next year, they were writing his obituary again. Heavy-hitting Steve Hamas stopped Loughran in two on January 15, and won a decision in a rematch. Tommy won the third match, but then not only lost to Stanley Poreda, but also incurred his first cauliflower ear in the process.

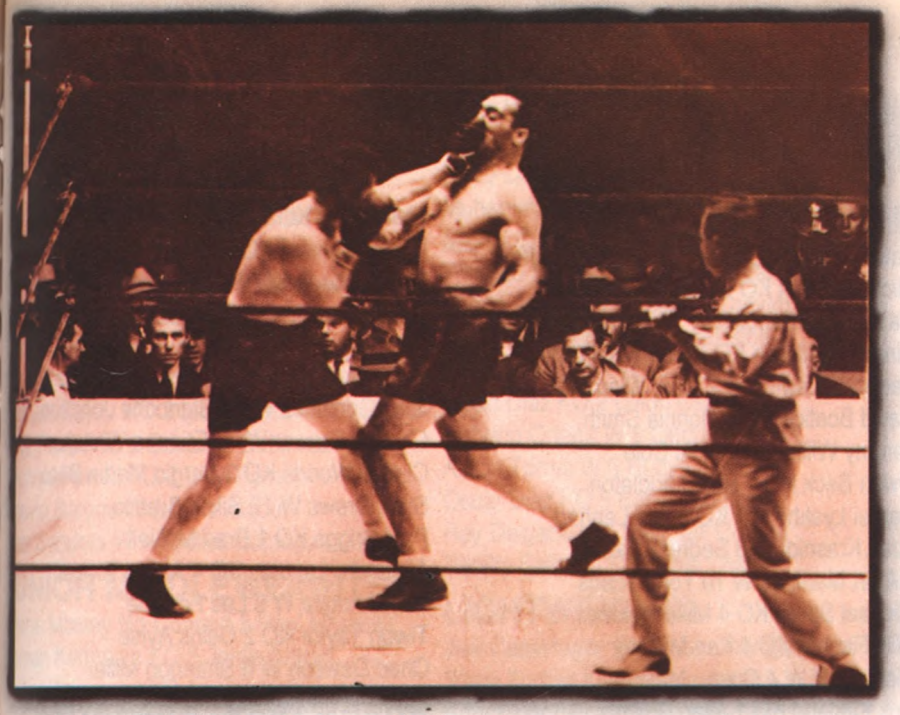
However, the most damaging blow of all that year hit Loughran square in the wallet. The Great Depression was on, and among the banks that went down for the count was the one in which Loughran had sunk all his ring earnings. Flat broke, Loughran had no choice but to keep fighting.

He still did it better than most, reversing an earlier loss to King Levinsky, beating Hamas again, and evening his record against Jack Sharkey with a 15-round decision.

His next two fights pitted the 5'11", 185-pound Loughran against the two largest fighters of that time. Loughran got an unprecedented break against 6'7½" Ray Impellitiere when, after the referee actually stopped their fight in the sixth round on account of a tremendous gash opened on Loughran's lower lip, the New York boxing commissioner at ringside ordered the fight resumed. Loughran won the decision.

But the bureaucracy was in the other corner when Loughran got his chance at the heavyweight title on March 1, 1934. The champion was 6'5¾" Primo Carnera, whose 30-inch thigh was only an inch smaller than Tommy's waist, and whose 84-pound pull

After he relinquished the light heavyweight title, Loughran campaigned as a heavyweight. Among the many top heavies he beat was Ernie Schaaf, pictured taking a jab from "The Philadelphia Phantom."



Loughran finally got a crack at the heavyweight title against Primo Carnera (right) in March 1934. Although he was outweighed by 84 pounds, Loughran lasted the distance, losing a 15-round decision.

in weight still stands as a record in a world title fight.

Primo wasn't much of a fighter, but his fists weren't Loughran's main concern. In training, Carnera had broken the foot of sparring partner George Manley by stepping on it with his own gondola-sized dogs, and the suspicion that he was practicing the Frankenstein Stomp to use against Loughran prompted the latter's camp to appeal to the Florida commission for help several days before the fight in Miami.

But Chairman Louis McReynolds decreed, "fighters must protect their feet just as they do their faces," and suggested, "the other man shouldn't leave his feet where they can be stepped on."

Given that engraved invitation, Carnera broke one of Loughran's toes in the first round and otherwise manhandled him to the point that the slickster who prided himself on finishing each round of a fight in his own corner so as to take full advantage of the one-minute rest period (because, Loughran said, "a second saved between rounds is of as much value to a boxer as a half-hour's sleep to the average man") was so exhausted at the bell ending the 14th round that Tommy plopped himself down in Primo's corner. The decision for Carnera was a formality.

Over the next two-plus years, Loughran was in and out of the rankings as he built up a new bank balance fighting all over the world. He was on the bad end of a few decisions as rank as the grease Loughran had plastered on his hair in the Carnera fight, hoping its odor would send Primo recoiling out of toe-mashing range. Judges might have been unmoved by the remnants of his skills, but boxing epicures ate it up.

"When a boxer of the Jim Driscoll type, like Loughran, makes old-timers sit up and remark, 'This is boxing as it was always intended to be,' it must have been a splendid exhibition," wrote THE RING's Johnny Sharpe after Loughran dropped a hometown verdict to Tommy Farr in London in 1936.

Later that year, as long as he was giving Joe Louis the MVB award and a title belt to heavyweight champion Jimmy Braddock, Fleischer bestowed yet another award on Loughran "for his splendid services to the fight game over a long period of years."

Asked THE RING editor: "Who has done more for the sport in a wholesome way?"

With apologies to grammarians dead and alive, if you can think of anybody else even 67 years later, you'd better sit down a minute and find out where you're at. ■

Pete Ehrmann is a freelance writer based in West Allis, Wisconsin, and a regular contributor to this magazine.

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SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Lawrence Clay-Bey W 10 Charles Shufford
Michael Grant KO 5 Carlton Johnson
DaVarryl Williamson W 10 Robert Wiggins
Sinan Samil San KO 6 Danny Williams
Terrence Lewis KO 2 Gary Winmon
David Bostice KO 4 Ronnie Smith
Jeremy Williams D 10 Al Cole
Owen Beck KO 1 Mike Middleton
Sergei Lyakhovich KO 9 Joe Lenhart
Luan Krasniqi W 8 Sedreck Fields
Gilbert Martinez W 10 Tony Tubbs
Michael Sprott KO 4 Mike Holden
Willi Fischer KO 4 Ken Murphy
Cisse Salif W 4 Onebo Maxime
Erik Kirkland KO 1 Allan Smith
Malik Scott KO 2 Terry McGroom
Cedric Boswell KO 5 Jim Strohl
Derek Bryant KO 2 Damon Reed
Dominick Guinn W 8 Otis Tisdale
Audley Harrison KO 4 Rob Calloway
Calvin Brock KO 3 Jeff Pegues
Terry Smith W 8 Derek Berry
Guru Singh KO 1 Brian Blakely
Malcolm Tann W 4 Harold Rodriguez
Malcolm Tann KO 1 Milan Roldzak
Marcus McGee KO 3 George Burrage

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Rydell Booker W 10 Uriah Grant
Kenny Keene W 10 Ray Berry
Elvir Muriqi KO 1 Mike Coker
Daniel Rowsell KO 3 Sam Leuii
Mark Hobson KO 4 Abdul Kadou
Prince Badi Ajamu KO 5 Dan Sheehan

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Julio Gonzalez W 10 Glencoffe Johnson
Charles Brewer W 10 Etianne Whitaker
Clinton Woods KO 3 Sergio Martin Beaz
Stipe Drews W 12 Silvio Branco
Paul Briggs KO 1 Brad McNeil
Alejandro Lakatus KO 4 Arturo Rivera
Will McIntyre W 8 Lee Fortune
Tiwon Taylor KO 2 Osiris Ayise
Chad Dawson W 6 Shannon Miller

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Anthony Mundine W 12 Sean Sullivan
Danilo Haussler Tech. Win 5 Glenn Catley
Brian Barbosa KO 2 Ronald Boddie
Kabary Salem W 12 Manu Ntoh
Danny Green KO 1 Brad Mayo
Fighting Nordin KO 4 Jose Barruetabena
Ross Thompson D 6 Shaun Creegan
Aaron Mitchell KO 3 Leonard Townsend
Ramon Britez W 10 Julio Cesar Vasquez
Oscar Bravo KO 2 Mack Willis
Undra White W 12 Larry Kenny
Brandon Mitchum W 6 Larry Banks
Quinton Smith KO 2 Ron Johnson
Miguel Espino D 6 Carl Cockerham

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Charles Brewer blasts Etianne Whitaker with a face-distorting hook

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Howard Eastman KO 3 Christophe Tendil
Robert Allen KO 1 Kevin Hall
Bert Schenk KO 5 Gyorgy Bugyk
Wayne Alexander W 6 Victor Fessechko
Raymond Joval W 12 Francisco Mora
Kuvanych Toygonbayev KO 7 Alfonso Mosquera
Anthony Farnell KO 10 Nikolai Talalakin
Lansana Diallo W 12 Sergej Marchuk
Eric Mitchell W 10 Leon Pearson
Hector Camacho Sr. KO 8 Otilio Villarreal
Christian Lloyd Joseph W 12 Jameel Wilson
Jermain Taylor KO 2 Lionel Ortiz
Kelly Pavlik KO 2 Eduardo Gutierrez
Sechew Powell KO 2 Billy Tipton
Ottavio Barone W 6 Mike Algoet
Bear Sanders W 4 Andres Larringa

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Shane Mosley No-Contest 3 Raul Marquez
Roman Karmazin KO 5 Jorge Araujo
Carlos Bojorquez KO 11 Grady Brewer
Michael Lerma W 10 Jason Papillion
Emmett Linton W 10 Manning Galloway
Takaloo KO 9 Jim Rock
Tony Marshall W 8 Charles Clark
Jimmy Vincent KO 8 David Walker
David Estrada W 10 Armando Velardez
Kenny Ellis KO 3 Terry Tock
Matt Vanda W 10 Homer Gibbons
Mihaly Kotai W 8 Brad Jensen
Paul Williams KO 2 Earl Jackson
Anthony Thompson KO 1 Jerome McLean
Yuri Foreman W 6 Andrey Trunov
Yuri Foreman KO 1 Will Evans
Brad Thompson KO 5 Moises Martinez
Giovanni Lorenzo KO 2 Adalberto Marte

WELTERWEIGHTS

Ricardo Mayorga KO 3 Vernon Forrest
(Wins World Title)
Antonio Margarito KO 2 Andrew Lewis
Ray Oliveira KO 6 Lorenzo Smith
Hector Quiroz KO 8 Steve Martinez
Adrian Stone KO 4 Sultan Dondan
Michel Trabant W 12 Frederic Klose
Raul Bejarano W 12 Paulo Sanchez
Neil Sinclair KO 8 Bradley Pryce
Chucky T KO 2 Scott DePompe
Han Yeong Park KO 8 Sony Rambing
Pavel Melnikov KO 4 Alexander Danilov
Francisco Bojado KO 10 Frankie Santos
Jose Celaya W 8 Norberto Bravo
Luis Collazzo W 8 Marcos Primera

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Kostya Tszyu KO 6 James Leija
(Retains World Title)
Sharmba Mitchell KO 4 Carlos Vilches
DeMarcus Corley W 12 Randall Bailey
Oktay Urkal W 12 Salvatore Battaglia
Omar Weis W 10 Emanuel Augustus
Diego Corrales KO 5 Michael Davis
Ricky Quiles W 12 Arturo Urena
Muhammad Abdullaev KO 4 Philip Holiday
Miguel Cotto KO 11 Cesar Bazan
Wilfredo Negron KO 7 Saul Duran
Alvaro Aguilar W 10 James Crayton
Mike Anchondo W 10 Angel Rios
Andreas Kotelnik W 12 Fabrice Colombel
David Diaz KO 2 Dillon Carew
Roberto Ortega W 8 Lemuel Nelson
Aaron Torres W 6 Rudy Lunsford
Oscar Diaz KO 5 Benito Rodriguez
Roy Delgado KO 1 Manuel Corona
Dimitry Salita KO 2 Richie Ueding

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Joel Casamayor W 10 Nate Campbell
Steve Forbes KO 5 Ron Longakit
Artur Grigorian W 12 Matt Zegan
Lamar Murphy KO 3 Sean Fletcher
Efren Hinojosa KO 6 Carlos Ramirez
Jason Cook W 12 Stefano Zoff
Silverio Oritz KO 7 Jorge Paez
Kengo Nagashima KO 6 Kioh Kil
Yuri Romanov KO 8 Bobby Vanzie
Eleazar Contreras W 12 Justo Sencion
Brian Adams KO 9 Luis Villalta
Michele Delli Paoli W 10 Michele Landi
Justin Juuko KO 2 Venance Mponji
Juan Diaz KO 7 John Bailey
Courtney Burton KO 1 Tomas Barrientes
Gary Balletto KO 2 Juan Polo Perez
Chikashi Inada W 10 Armando Hernandez
Rogelio Castaneda KO 1 Eliezer Valentin
Octavio Lara KO 3 Rafael Sierra

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Sirimongkol Singmanassak W 12
Yongsoo Choi
(Retains WBC Title)
Carlos Hernandez Tech. Win 8 David Santos
(Wins Vacant IBF Title)
Yodsanan Nanathachai KO 2 Turpo Alpian
(Non-Title Bout)
Jorge Barrios KO 4 Orlando Soto
Oscar Leon KO 1 Marty Robbins
Nadel Hussein KO 3 Samson Elnino
Gary St. Clair KO 1 Reo Saragih
Mzonke Fana KO 7 Khululekile Sibeko
Nobuhito Honma W 10 Kazuhiro Fujita
Hector Velazquez W 6 Marcos Badillo
Carl Johanneson KO 5 Juan Llopis
Pascali Adorno Tech. Draw 3
Miguel Angel Huerta
Bernard Dunne KO 1 Eric Trujillo
Jose Lopez KO 1 Allen Litzau

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Juan Manuel Marquez KO 7 Manuel Medina
(Wins Vacant IBF Title)
Oscar Larios W 10 Marcos Licona
(Non-Title Bout)
Nicky Cook KO 12 Misheck Konkani
Rocky Juarez KO 9 Jason Pires
Chris John KO 8 Dante Paulino
Yoshinori Miyata W 10 Jeffrey Onate
Rey Beltran W 10 Edel Ruiz
Erik Rodriguez W 8 Juan Ruiz
Bernard Dunne KO 1 Simon Ramirez

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Yoddamrong Sithyodthong KO 4
Don Don Lapus
Napapol Kiatisakchokchai KO 5
Arial Austria

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Veerapol Sahaprom KO 6
Nathan Barcelona
(Non-Title Bout)
Jorge Lacierva KO 4 Julio Cesar Ruiz
Vernie Torres KO 10 Julio Coronel
Saohin Sithchai Condo W 6 Elwis Guamiki
Alex Baba KO 1 Pape Diouf
Noel Wilders W 12 Fabien Guillerme
Caesar Morales KO 5 Jose Sarabia
Jose Aguiniga W 10 Rodrigo Facio

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Luis Perez W 12 Felix Machado
(Wins IBF Title)
Fernando Montiel KO 3 Roy Doliguez
Mauricio Pastrana KO 8 Evaristo Primero
Medgoen Singsurat W 12 Alfren Bulala
Jose Navarro KO 2 Carlos Madrigal

FLYWEIGHTS

Brian Viloria W 12 Alejandro Moreno
Luis Maldonado KO 5 Manuel Sarabia
Komrith Lukkeongmuekol KO 5
Melvin Magramo
Liborio Romero KO 3 Christian Hernandez

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Hugo Cazares KO 3 Eric Jamili
Eagle Okuda KO 8 Fabio Marfa
Munetsugu Kayoh KO 6 Saknarong Vorapin

STRAWWEIGHTS

Muhammad Rachman W 10 Patrick Twala
Satoshi Kogumazaka W 10 Hiroyuki Abe
Junichiro Kaneda KO 1
Wanchana Seepachan
Oleydong Sithsamuochai W 10 Neneo Suilo

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The RING

FIGHTER of the MONTH

For a guy who calls himself "El Matador," Ricardo Mayorga sure fights a lot like a bull. Vernon Forrest, on the other hand, was expected to be holding the red cape when the top two welterweights in the world clashed at the Pechanga Resort & Casino, but he couldn't keep Mayorga's horns out of his face, and he got gored as a result. Courtesy of a sudden, devastating third-round right hand, Mayorga is now the 147-pound champion of the world and one of the hottest stars in boxing.

PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/HBO

It was supposed to be a fairly routine title defense for Forrest, the 2002 Fighter of the Year and the man who somehow made Sugar Shane Mosley look ordinary. Mayorga, however, is anything but ordinary, and he refused to let Forrest have his way with him. Forrest is normally the definition of a controlled fighter, but Mayorga seized control away from him with his swarming, all-offense style. Mayorga scored a knockdown late in the first round with a half-push, half-punch left hand, and from the bell to open the second round, the war was on. The Nicaraguan took everything Forrest had to offer, but the same could not be said of the previously unbeaten champion. A thudding right to the side of the head ended matters two minutes into round three, and this poor man's Hagler-Hearns was suddenly, and dramatically, over.

The Fighter of the Year has been dethroned. And an early frontrunner for 2003's honors has emerged.

• • • •

Ricardo Mayorga

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Kostya Tszyu KO 6 Jesse James Leija

Melbourne, Australia: Cheered on by some 28,000 raucous Melbournians, undisputed world junior welterweight champion Tszyu retained his belts in anticlimactic fashion when Leija failed to answer the bell for round seven of their clash at the Telstra Dome. Starting a 6-1 underdog, former WBC super featherweight titlist Leija was never really expected to have much of a chance against the bigger and stronger punching Tszyu. But following an impressive start, where he looked to have won two of the opening three rounds, his meek surrender at the conclusion of the sixth came as a surprise to many.

Claiming a broken right eardrum, Leija, 43-6-2 (17) with 1 no-contest, saw his hopes of further championship glory end when his father, Jesse, summoned Australian referee Malcolm Bulner to the blue corner and informed him of the injury and subsequent withdrawal. Leija, 36, later explained that he felt the injury as early as the fourth round and said it was a repeat of an injury he suffered in his loss to Shane Mosley in 1998.

In registering his second defense of the undisputed title (and his seventh since winning the WBC crown in August '99), the 33-year-old champion had to withstand the enormous pressure that comes with fighting a supposedly easy fight in front an expectant nation.

"The people who put the pressure before the fight for a first or second-round knockout, it's wrong," said the pony-tailed titleholder. "It put pressure on me because everyone expected me to knock Jesse out in the first, second round, but I never thought this way because I know how tough he is."

Relentless Tszyu wears down Leija

The pressure seemed to tell on the usually cold and calculating Tszyu, 30-1-1 (24), when his shorter challenger bounced out of the blocks to arguably take the opening rounds by using swift combinations, overhand rights, and a low-crouching defense that appeared to catch a cautious Tszyu, 139¾, unaware. The most significant blow of these early rounds was landed by the San Antonio, Texas, native when he made the champion reel back toward the ropes following a looping overhand right early in round three. By round's end, however, Tszyu was beginning to walk down and wear down his older opponent.

Over the next nine minutes, Leija quickly went from providing a spirited challenge to resembling a walking heavybag. The clearly stronger Tszyu began to land his heavy shots to nearly every legal section of Leija's torso and head, and Leija, 139, probably knew things were only going to get worse when his corner stopped the fight at the end of the sixth.

At the time of the stoppage, the three judges had Tszyu comfortably ahead. Poparat Sricharion (Thailand) had it a hard-to-figure 60-54 shutout, Aneeka Williams (Australia) saw it 59-55, and Stanley Christodolou (South Africa) scored it 58-56, the same as THE RING.

Leija described Tszyu as a "great champion" and a "relentless pressure fighter." Tszyu, while respectful and gracious, stated "he did not lose because of an ear problem. The ear problem was caused by being hit."

Remember when fight managers would dictate when their fighters would go around again and with whom? Well in this case, both men indicated they would both discuss matters with their wives before deciding what would come after their pending vacations.

Television: Showtime

Promoters: Millennium Events/Talent Works

(1-19-03)

Daniel Gaylor

DeMarcus Corley W 12 Randall Bailey

Washington, D.C.: Given a chance to shine in a Showtime main event, "Chop Chop" Corley turned in a tepid, safety-first performance that elicited far more boos than cheers from the gathering of 3,196 hometown fans at the D.C. Armory. By the time Corley was awarded a unanimous 12-round decision, most of the paying customers had already headed for the exits.

Bailey, perhaps the hardest single-shot puncher in the junior welterweight division, put forth even less effort, never unleashing the sort of go-for-broke attack that had brought him success throughout his career.

So why did such a promising match turn out to be a dud? Some blamed a poor clash of styles—Corley is a tricky mover, Bailey a pure puncher—but there was more to it than that.

Even though Corley, 139, had shown more aggression of late, throughout most of his career he's been the sort of boxer who preferred not to take too many risks, especially if the guy in the other corner could fight a bit. Against the dangerous Bailey, he simply reverted to form.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

"Chop Chop" holds off compliant Bailey with a left

Bailey, 140, Miami, Florida, is tougher to figure, especially as he's been involved in a number of bombs-away thrillers in the past. Even in his two previous defeats, he'd had his opponent on the deck before succumbing. But either his arduous fights have caught up with him, he's run out of ambition, or Corley's counters were more discouraging than they looked.

Almost all the rounds followed a similar pattern. The quicker, more athletic Corley, 28-1-1 (16), would circle away from his stalking adversary, stop every now and then to land a quick counter, and then climb back on his bicycle. It was the same round after lackluster round, with nary a highlight worth mentioning.

Convinced by the start of the 10th round that he was comfortably out in front (he was), Corley did even less down the stretch, which allowed Bailey, 26-3 (26), to close the gap slightly by working a tad harder. But by then, hardly anybody cared, and the bout fizzled to a conclusion to the sound of further discontent from the few fans that remained.

"I could have been busier," admitted Corley, 28.

"I was waiting for him to make a mistake instead of just attacking," said Bailey, also 28.

Boxing in D.C. was on life-support prior to this card; these two guys just might have finished it off.

For the record: Judges Valerie Dorset (117-112), Luis Rivera (116-112), and Lloyd Scaise (117-111) all scored the bout in favor of Corley. The referee was Joseph Cooper.

Promoter: Don King Productions

(1-4-03)

Nigel Collins

Luis Perez W 12 Felix Machado

Washington, D.C.: There must be something in the water in Managua, Nicaragua. The same province that produced world welterweight champion Ricardo Mayorga, the free-swinging, cigarette-smoking slugger who clocked Vernon Forrest in late-January, also is called home by Perez, now the IBF junior bantamweight titleholder after his upset win over Machado at the D.C. Armory. Perez won on the Corley-Bailey undercard by following the same ring strategy as his fellow Managua native: Throw punches all of the time, and never stop coming forward.

The southpaw Perez, 114, known as "El Demoledor" ("Demolition Man"), was relentless from the outset, swinging wildly at fellow lefthander Machado, 114, Venezuela. Machado's attempts to smother Perez by clinching were countered by Perez pulling and twisting free. Machado had success on the outside with stinging blows, but could never completely stem Perez' swarming attack.

A clash of heads in the opening round caused Machado's right eye to swell. The eye grew progressively worse as Perez, 24, continued throwing looping punches that slammed into the injured area. Machado's chances of making his fourth successful title defense were hurt even more when referee Ken Chevalier (USA) penalized him a point for a low blow early in the fifth. The deduction, however, seemed to motivate Machado, 30, temporarily, and he used his footwork and counterpunching to control the remainder of the round.

The fight was frequently sloppy, but never dull. Perez, 21-1 (14), appeared to have swept rounds nine, 10, and 11, but Machado, his right eye a mess, bravely rallied in the 12th round to make it close.

Judges Paul Artisst (USA) and Tammye Jenkins (USA) had Perez winning by scores of 115-112 and 114-113, respectively, while judge Walter Cavalieri (USA) was apparently watching a different fight and somehow had Machado up by a score of 117-110. THE RING favored Perez by 115-113.

The bout resulted in both fighters spending the night in the hospital. They were released the next day, but Machado, 22-4-1 (12), underwent surgery to repair cheek fractures upon his return to Caracas.

"I went into this fight thinking I could knock out Machado," Perez said. "Machado is a skillful fighter who liked to run away.

Swollen Machado absorbs a jab from Perez

Machado was a different fighter than I expected. I never thought he'd complicate the fight so much by holding, but he's very strong."

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Don King Productions

(1-4-03)

Joseph Santoliquito

Masamori Tokuyama W 12 Gerry Penalosa

Osaka, Japan: WBC super flyweight titlist Tokuyama barely kept the belt via split decision in his sixth defense, a see-saw 12-rounder with ex-titleholder, top contender, and fellow southpaw Penalosa. Judges Tom Kaczmarek (USA) and Richie Davies (England) scored it 114-113 and 116-111, respectively, for the defending beltholder, while Duane Ford (USA) had it 114-113 for the Filipino Penalosa. It was a rematch to another close fight that the Japan-based North Korean had won in September '01.

Tokuyama was docked a point in the third round when an unintentional butt opened a nasty cut on Penalosa's forehead. Tokuyama suffered a gash of his own, under the right eyebrow, from a legal punch in the eighth. The titleholder had a big round in the 10th, when he doubled over the 30-year-old challenger with body attacks. But the brave Penalosa fought back hard in the last two rounds to make it hard to decide who had won.

With the win, Tokuyama, 28, moved to 28-2-1 (8), while Penalosa fell to 46-5-2 (31). A few days after the fight, the Filipino veteran announced his retirement from boxing.

(12-20-02)

Joe Koizumi

Noel Arambulet W 12 Keitaro Hoshino

Osaka, Japan: Speedy Venezuelan Arambulet eked out a repeat majority decision over two-time former titlist Hoshino to retain the WBA minimumweight title in the first defense of his second reign. The Japanese challenger, dethroned by Arambulet last July by virtually the same scores, fought to a 115-115 draw on the card of judge Guy Jutras (Canada), but Luis Pabon (Puerto Rico) and Silvestre Abainza (Philippines) both scored it 115-113 in favor of the 28-year-old Arambulet.

In the early rounds, the 33-year-old Hoshino, 23-9 (6), landed the more effective shots, though Arambulet, 19-2-1 (10) with 1 no-contest, was scoring with the greater quantity. And after attacking positively for the first half of the fight, Hoshino went into a shell from the seventh round on, allowing the determined and busy titleholder to turn back his challenge.

(12-20-02)

Joe Koizumi

Joel Casamayor W 10 Nate Campbell

Temecula, California: If the Marquis of Queensbury were to return from the grave and watch Cuban defector Casamayor for just three minutes, he would wonder whatever happened to his rules. The southpaw uses his head, elbows, and forearms as natural components in his repertoire.

Casamayor, whose only loss was a close, disputed decision to

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Campbell and Casamayor let right hands fly

Acelino Freitas a year earlier, had made his mark as one of the two best junior lightweights in the world. But Campbell, stepping up in class, nearly pulled off an upset in a close contest with plenty of action. By its end, both fighters were marked and bleeding.

Although the judges at the Pechanga Resort & Casino saw it unanimously for Casamayor, they agreed on only four of the rounds. Scores were also mixed among boxing writers ringside. Some had it for Casamayor, some for Campbell, and others called it a draw. THE RING saw it 96-94 Casamayor, who took this fight only one month after stopping Yoni Vargas in five rounds.

Campbell, 131, Jacksonville, Florida, had the edge in the early rounds. He pressed the fight while Casamayor, 31, did lots of standing around. But beginning in round four, with the fight heating up, Campbell started to weaken. His punches kept coming, but many were sloppy.

In round five, Casamayor, 133, Miami, Florida, via Cuba, shook Campbell with a combination. When Campbell stepped back, Casamayor came forward and punished him some more. Campbell shook his head to signal he was not hurt, which of course meant he was.

In the middle rounds, Campbell came alive in spurts, landing some vicious shots against his fouling tormentor. But by round 10, "The Galaxxy Warrior" was just trying to hold his ground. All three California judges scored it for Casamayor. Chuck Hassett had it 96-94, Jerry Cantu saw it 97-93, and David Mendoza scored it 98-92, giving Campbell only the first and fourth rounds.

Campbell, 23-1 (21), is a game, world-class competitor who packs a decent punch. If he could turn his conditioning up a notch, he could pull off a surprise. At age 30, he can't wait too long.

Plenty of good fights could be put together in this division. But no matter how you slice it, Casamayor, 29-1 (18), remains a tough man to beat.

The referee was Pat Russell (USA).

Television: HBO

Promoter: DiBella Entertainment in association with Cedric Kushner Promotions, Team Freedom, Main Events, and Goossen-Tutor Promotions

(1-25-03)

Ivan Goldman

Sharmba Mitchell KO 4 Carlos Vilches

Atlantic City, New Jersey: Going directly from a major high to a major low, top junior welterweight contender Mitchell, 32, tore through Vilches, 26, in a scheduled 12-rounder at Bally's in probably his most explosive offensive performance in years, then was detained by police and thrown in jail mere moments later.

Details of the legal matter that led to Mitchell, 51-3 (30), being jailed for 36 hours were not immediately available after the fight, but it was revealed several days later that Mitchell had been charged with one count of misdemeanor attempted threats against a woman. Mitchell pleaded not guilty and was due to return to court on February 18.

Against the overmatched Vilches, 37-3-2 (24), the southpaw Mitchell scored with crisp, clean punches all night. Mitchell, 140, Washington, D.C., dropped the Argentine in the first round with a straight right to the chin that caught him off-balance, and then proceeded over the next couple of rounds to back Vilches up with straight lefts, while the underdog tried countering with wide, looping punches.

A cut opened up under the right eye of Vilches, 140, in the third round. By the fourth, Mitchell had Vilches ready to go, and "The Little Big Man" scored the second knockdown of the fight with a beautiful left uppercut. Moments later, a chopping left sent Vilches down again. After the game Vilches regained his feet, Mitchell unloaded a half dozen more punches, prompting Vilches' corner to toss a white towel into the ring. Referee Tony Orlando (USA) immediately stopped the bout at the 2:58 second mark of the fourth.

"A lot of guys seem to think they can beat me by coming straight at me," said Mitchell, just before being detained. "If they think they can rough me up, I don't mind getting into a brawl. And if they want to stay away, I don't mind going after them. I have enough experience to handle any situation."

Mitchell once again called out world champion Kostya Tszyu after the fight. The Vilches victory made him the IBF's number-two contender (he was already number two in the WBA), so although Tszyu says he has no desire to give Mitchell a shot, he may eventually have to fight the D.C. southpaw to keep all of his alphabet belts.

Television: Showtime
Promoter: Gary Shaw
(1-25-03)
Joseph Santoliquito

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Mitchell cracks Vilches with his nasty left uppercut

Sirimongkol Singmanassak W 12 Yongsoo Choi

Tokyo, Japan: Fast-moving Thailander Sirimongkol, 130, made his first defense of the WBC super feather belt a successful one. He impressively used his left jab and footwork to elude the desperate retaliations of ex-WBA ruler Yongsoo Choi, 130, South Korea, winning a lopsided decision over 12 heats at the Korakuen Hall.

The three American judges all scored the bout widely in Sirimongkol's favor. Richard Flaherty and Lou Filippo both had it 119-109, and Julie Lederman saw it 118-110. Yet despite the one-sided tallies, it was a good fight.

Sirimongkol celebrates win over ex-titlist Choi

Sirimongkol, five years Choi's junior at 25, displayed his superior speed in outjabbing and outlegging the flat-footed Korean from the start, and before the first round was over, the defending titlist's stinging lefts had Choi's right eye swollen. Choi failed in nearly every early attempt to get close to the elusive jabber. In the fifth, even when Choi finally connected with several right hands, Sirimongkol outpunched him with sharp jabs and smashing rights.

It remained a Tom-and-Jerry game, with the elusive Thai piling up points with his footwork and accurate counterpunches. Choi showed his best in the ninth, when he fired furiously and almost caught Sirimongkol, but the titleholder kept his cool and held Choi off with his defensive skills. The last two sessions saw Sirimongkol outbox and outpunch the fading challenger with his still sharp jabs and quick combos.

Choi, an admirable loser whose fighting spirit was praised by the crowd, fell to 29-4-1 (19). Sirimongkol, 41-1 (23), was scheduled to get right back into the ring on March 22 in Las Vegas against mandatory challenger Jesus Chavez of Mexico.

"I am very happy to win my first defense," Sirimongkol said. "I thought the opponent wouldn't be able to keep up with me if I used my footwork."

The referee was Frank Cappuccino (USA).

Promoter: Teiken Promotions in association with Cheyenne Hasegawa Gym
(1-13-03)
Joe Koizumi

New Face

(Continued from page 20)

Paulie Ayala. He had only been stopped twice prior to meeting Luevano, never earlier than the sixth round.

"The grand picture with Steven is fighting eight- and 10-round fights by the end of this year, and by the end of next year we're looking at a world title shot," explained Cameron Dunkin, Luevano's manager. "Steven was always a very good boxer, but he's starting to punch better. We saw that against Alvarez. He's growing into his strength and power. When Steven first turned pro, a lot of people thought he'd be a junior lightweight or a lightweight. I don't see him moving up right away. I see him one day fighting for a title at 126 pounds."

Dunkin is also impressed by Luevano's very stable home environment. Unlike many pro fighters, Luevano had no noteworthy hardships to overcome in his youth, nor did he have any run-ins with the law. In fact, the only run-ins Luevano deals with on an every-day basis come from watching his two children, Rebecca and four-year-old Robert.

Mornings are the toughest. A typical morning involves Marina, Luevano's girlfriend, the mother of their two kids, leaving for work by 6 a.m. That means Luevano is usually awakened by his two screaming kids jumping on him in bed—or by the dreaded sock in the face that lets Dad know the younger one wants breakfast.

"I do get a break," said Luevano, laughing. "When Rebecca takes her nap, I only have to chase one around instead of chasing two. It's crazy, real crazy. You always have to keep an eye on one of them, especially Rebecca, who likes to get into stuff. Robert just likes breaking stuff. Going to the gym is a relief for me, because I get four hours to myself. I actually take my time running, because I get to spend more time alone."

But there have been times when Luevano has had to take his children to the gym with him. "That becomes even tougher, because Robert always likes jumping into the ring. But Rebecca likes fighting more than Robert," Luevano said. "She already puts her hands up. She likes to punch. The other thing is that they both know they can get away with anything from me and not Marina."

The children have forced Luevano to think differently about his career. Whereas he was patient with his development before, Luevano's thinking has changed as providing for his children's future has become more of an issue.

"Boxing has changed a lot since my kids were born," Luevano said. "I know now that I have to fight to make the money. I broke my hand once, and it forced my girlfriend to go to work. I've always been serious about boxing, but I know I do have to train harder to win. I need to stay focused on the fight and not worry about any problems."

Luevano, a Mexican-American, certainly has the right vehicle to promote him in Top Rank, a company that focuses more on Latino boxing fans than any other major American promotional outfit.

If anything is going to hold Luevano back from following Dunkin's timetable, it may be injuries, according to Top Rank matchmaker Bruce Trampler. Luevano had to take off close to a year, from July '01 to June '02, to let two broken bones in his left hand heal after a four-round technical decision over Freddie Castro.

"Steven has quietly developed and beaten a few fighters who have decent names," Trampler said. "He's still extremely young in both experience and age. He's a work-in-progress that you can revisit him a few years from now and see what you have. Steven is moving well though, graduating from six-rounders to eight-rounders. Steven has no strings attached, no issues. He's a terrific kid and a terrific prospect. He's very fundamentally sound. He doesn't have one great attribute, but he does everything well.

"Our main concern is his hands. If his hands hold up and we give him time to develop, we might have something. Having kids and taking care of them makes everyone different. That just shows how Steven has maturity well beyond his years. He accepts his responsibility and deals with them. There's very little baggage with Steven. He's one of the few fighters you can say that about."

Luevano's start in boxing came when his mother, Enriqueta, decided that Steven and his brother David, now 23 and in the Marine Corps, should learn how to defend themselves. Steven developed a passion for the sport and continued boxing after the family moved from Los Angeles to La Puente, located about 20 miles east of L.A., when he was 10.

He was very successful in the amateur ranks, taking home various age group Golden Gloves and Silver Gloves titles. Upon graduating from Workman High School, Luevano thought seriously about following his brother and entering the military, or about possibly becoming a police officer. Instead, Luevano opted to stick with boxing to see where the sport would take him.

The path led him to the Olympic Trials, where Luevano was beaten 11-4 by Juarez in their first meeting, only to bounce back and lose by a point their second time around.

"I thought that first fight with Rocky was a closer fight than how the points were scored," Luevano said. "I'll admit I saw myself losing that first fight, but in the Box-offs, Rocky beat me by a point, when I didn't think he beat me. I told people that I felt I was screwed over the second fight, and I thought there should have been a third fight."

Luevano thought hard about coming back and trying to make the U.S. Olympic Team in '04, but decided to start a pro career because he wanted to be able to support his growing family. Now with Robert and Rebecca, Luevano doesn't get a break.

He doesn't mind taking them to his fights. The only one who gets nervous watching Luevano fight is Marina.

"It is important that I'm near my kids and near my family," Luevano said. "That doesn't really get in the way of my training, either. Some people need that separation from their families and friends when they're getting ready for a fight. I'm just the opposite. Marina gives me my space when I have to prepare for a fight, and the kids don't really bother me that much, besides punching me in the face in the morning." ■

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June 2000: The Honors Keep Coming! Lenox Lewis Receives The Undisputed RING Belt. Plus: Roy Jones, Vernon Forrest, Teddy Atlas, Mike Tyson, Don Fullmer.

July 2000 (92-Page Special): The State Of The Game. Plus: Felix Trinidad, Zab Judah, Oscar De La Hoya, Barrera-Morales, Ken Buchanan, Beau Jack, Eric Bottjer.

Aug. 2000: Hamed! And The Men Who Want To Kick His Naz! Plus: David Reid, James Prince, Anthony Fletcher, Micky Ward, final beatings, white hopes.

Sept. 2000: A New Look At Lennox Lewis: Is He An All-Time Great? Plus: Winky Wright, Michael Moorer, De La Hoya & Vargas, Eddie McGoorty.

Oct. 2000 (92-Page Special): Move Up Or Shut Up! We're Sick Of Roy Jones' Heavyweight Tease. Plus: Lennox Lewis, Tapia & Romero, Hasim Rahman, Dwight Qawi, Al Palzer, fight films, best refs.
(ALL-COLOR BEGINNING WITH THE DECEMBER 2000 ISSUE)

Dec. 2000: The Hell With Tyson—Tua Is The Man Who Could Beat Lewis. Plus: Mike Tyson, Felix Trinidad, Wladimir Klitschko, Trilla in Manila, U.S. vs. World, Toxey Hall.

Jan. 2001 (108-Page Extra): Trinidad's Destiny: Jones Is On His Mind ... But Vargas Is In His Face! Plus: Naseem Hamed, Tszyu-Judah, Evander Holyfield, Willie Bean, 20 greatest middleweights.

Feb. 2001: It's Not Over For Oscar: THE RING's Five-Step Recovery Plan. Plus: Bob Arum, Dingaan Thobela, Hernandez brothers, U.S. Olympic team, future pound-for-pounders.

March 2001 (108-Page Extra): Tyson! Forget About Retirement ... A Title Shot Awaits! Plus: Ayala-Tapia II, Audley Harrison, Chris Byrd, Kirk Johnson, Julio Cesar Chavez, Boone Kirkman, 12 most exciting rounds.

April 2001: A New Beginning ... A New Middle: Felix Trinidad Is Ready To Conquer Another Division! Plus: Shane Mosley, Lennox Lewis, Paul Andrews, boxing business.

May 2001 (108-Page Extra): Felix Trinidad—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, Barrera-Hamed preview, Bernard Hopkins, Joey Archer.

June 2001: Pretty Boy Floyd: Superstar Or Superbrat? Plus: Lewis vs. greats, 2000 Olympians, Henry Hall, rematches we'd like to see.

July 2001 (108-Page Extra): The State Of The Game. Plus: Zab Judah, John Ruiz, Andrew Lewis, Mark Johnson, British boxing.

Aug. 2001: Rocking The World! What Rahman's Victory Means To Boxing. Plus: Barrera-Hamed, Oscar De La Hoya, Mount Whitaker, *Friday Night Fights.*

Sept. 2001 (108-Page Extra): Exclusive RING Interview—Hasim Rahman: "Nobody's Taking My Titles!" Plus: 20 all-time greatest lightweights, Pat Valentino, Hopkins & King, Jones & Arum.

Oct. 2001: Trinidad vs. Hopkins: Middleweight Unification Superfight Analysis & Predictions. Plus: Emanuel Steward, Joe Calzaghe, Ali's opponents, Rahman & King.

Nov. 2001 (108-Page Extra): THE RING 100: Ranking The Best Fighters In The World. Plus: Oscar De La Hoya, Jesus Chavez, Hall of Fame (Sugar Ramos, Ismael Laguna), Luther Rawlings, 15-rounders.

Dec. 2001: The Rock Promises Another Shock! "I'm Gonna Knock Lennox Out Again!" Plus: David Reid, Jones-Gonzalez, McCline-Grant, Jackie Graves, ring deaths.

Jan. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Oscar Feeds His Critics: Did He Chicken Out Against Vargas? Plus: Wladimir Klitschko, Chris Byrd, 20 greatest featherweights, "Caveman" Bob Moha.

March 2002 (108-Page Extra): Is Tyson Ready To Regain The Title? Plus: Kostya Tszyu, Floyd Mayweather, Bernard Hopkins, Eddie Futch, fitness, ahead for 2002.

April 2002: Time For Tyson: The Final Step In Lewis' Legacy. Plus: Muhammad Ali, Barrera-Morales II preview, Ron Stander, THE RING's championship policy.

May 2002 (108-Page Extra): Bernard Hopkins—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, Holyfield-Ruiz III, 2000 Olympians, Eric Harding, "Silent" Hairston.

June 2002: Lennox Lewis: I'll End The Tyson "Freak Show!" Plus: Forrest-Mosley, Freitas-Casamayor, De La Hoya & Vargas, Hagler & Leonard.

July 2002 (108-Page Extra): Exclusive Preview: The Oscar-Fernando Hatefest. Plus: Hopkins & Monzon, Francisco Bojado, Buddy McGirt, Lionel Rose, State of the Game.

Aug. 2002: Lewis vs. Tyson: Who Will Win ... And What Happens Next. Plus: Michael Moorer, Jeff Fenech, Charley Parham, Rafael & Juan Manuel Marquez.

Sept. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Vernon Forrest—Next Step In The Master Plan: End Mosley's Career. Plus: Sugar Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran, Ricardo Mayorga, 20 greatest lightweights.

Oct. 2002: Tito' Back ... And He's "Going To Make Hopkins Pay!" Plus: Ward-Gatti, Bouie Fisher, controversial scoring, ruining prospects.

Nov. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Monster Mashed! Can A New Tyson Emerge From The Rubble? Plus: THE RING 100, Evander Holyfield, Don King, Billy Joiner, junior welters.

Dec. 2002: Ward & Gatti Look To Hit Another Grand Slam! Plus: Forrest-Mosley II, Barrera-Morales II, Manny Pacquiao, Tim Austin, Nino Benvenuti, Mark Taffet.

Jan. 2003 (108-Page Extra): The Golden Boy Proves His Manhood: Is Oscar De La Hoya' Prime Just Beginning? Plus: Michael Grant, David Tua, previews of Morales-Ayala and Ward-Gatti II, overrated/under-rated.

Feb. 2003: The Resurrection Of A Warrior: Cam Evander Holyfield Recapture The Glory Of His Youth? Also: Floyd Mayweather Sr., Nate Campbell, Tom & Peter McNeeley, boxing finances, pound-for-pound.

March 2003 (108-Page Extra): Hamed ... Morales ... Tapia: Barrera Has Punched His Ticket To The Hall Of Fame. Also: Joe Mesi, Ricardo Lopez, Pipino Cuevas, alphabet tales, what's ahead for '03.

April 2003: Gatti Has His Ducks In A Row: A New Woman And A New Trainer Put The "Art" Back In Arturo. Also: Barrera-Morales, Roy Jones, Phillip Ndou & Silence Mabuza, Laila Ali, Gorilla Jones,

May 2003 (108-Page Extra): Ali ... Leonard ... Tyson ... Klitschko? Also: Year-end awards, Chris Byrd, Lupe Pintor, Maxie Rosenbloom.

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		☐ Nov/88	☐ Dec/91		☐ Mar/99	☐ Jun/01
☐ Feb/83	☐ Jan/86		**All 8 $31**	☐ Jan/96	☐ Apr/99	☐ Jul/01
☐ Mar/83	☐ Mar/86	**All 8 $31**		☐ Feb/96	☐ May/99	☐ Aug/01
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☐ May/83	☐ May/86	☐ Feb/89	☐ May/92	☐ Sep/96	☐ Jul/99	☐ Oct/01
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☐ Dec/84	☐ Aug/87	☐ Aug/90	☐ Aug/94		☐ Jun/00	☐ Oct/02
All 6 $25	☐ Sep/87	☐ Sep/90	☐ Oct/94	☐ Jan/98	☐ Jul/00	☐ Nov/02
	☐ Nov/87	☐ Nov/90	☐ Dec/94	☐ Feb/98	☐ Aug/00	☐ Dec/02
☐ Jan/85	☐ Dec/87	☐ Dec/90	**All 4 $18**	☐ Mar/98	☐ Sep/00	**All 11 $40**
☐ Feb/85	**All 8 $31**	**All 11 $40**		☐ Apr/98	☐ Oct/00	
☐ Mar/85			☐ Jan/95	☐ Jun/98	☐ Dec/00	☐ Jan/03
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☐ Aug/85	☐ Mar/88	☐ Apr/91	☐ Jul/95	☐ Sep/98	☐ Jan/01	☐ Apr/03
☐ Oct/85	☐ Apr/88	☐ Jun/91	☐ Oct/95	☐ Oct/98	☐ Feb/01	☐ May/03
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Alphabet Ratings

The Rankings of Boxing's Three International Governing Bodies

WBA RATINGS
(Ratings as of December 2002)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: John Ruiz (USA)
1. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
2. David Tua (NZ)
3. Hasim Rahman (USA)
4. Mike Tyson (USA)
5. Evander Holyfield (USA)
6. Fres Oquendo (PR)
7. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
8. Faruq Saleem (USA)
9. Lamon Brewster (USA)
10. Joe Mesi (USA)
11. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)
12. Nicolay Valouev (RUS)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Jean Marc Mormeck (FRA)
1. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
2. James Toney (USA)
3. Virgil Hill (USA)
4. O'Neil Bell (USA)
5. Luis Pineda (PAN)
6. Valery Brudov (RUS)
7. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
8. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
9. Ravea Springs (USA)
10. Louis Azille (GUY)
11. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
12. Alexander Petkovick (GER)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
Champ: Bruno Girard (FRA)
1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Lou Del Valle (USA)
4. Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
5. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
6. Manuel Siaca (PR)
7. David Telesco (USA)
8. Reggie Johnson (USA)
9. Montell Griffin (USA)
10. Rocky Torres (USA)
11. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
12. Rodney Moore (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Byron Mitchell (USA)
1. Antwun Echols (USA)
2. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
3. David Starie (GB)
4. Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)
5. Mads Larsen (DEN)
6. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
7. Danilo Haussler (GER)
8. Thomas Tate (USA)
9. Markus Beyer (GER)
10. Nordin Ben Salah (NETH)
11. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
12. Charles Brewer (USA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
Champ: William Joppy (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Bert Schenk (GER)
3. Antonio Perugino (ITA)
4. Robert Allen (USA)
5. Maselino Masoe (AUSTRL)
6. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
7. Howard Eastman (GB)
8. Erland Betare (FRA)
9. Evans Ashira (DEN)
10. Hassine Cherifi (FRA)
11. Lee Blundell (USA)
12. Kingsley Ikeke (NIG)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Oscar De La Hoya
Champ: Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
1. Vacant
2. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
3. Travis Simms (USA)
4. J.C. Candelo (COL)
5. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
6. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
7. Michael Rask (DEN)
8. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)
9. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
10. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
11. Angel Hernandez (USA)
12. Andrei Pestriaev (RUS)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Ricardo Mayorga (CR)
1. Vacant
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
3. Michael Trabant (GER)
4. Jose Rivera (USA)
5. Andrew Lewis (GUY)
6. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
7. Cory Spinks (USA)
8. Felix Flores (PR)
9. Carlos Quintana (PR)
10. Vince Phillips (USA)
11. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
12. Frederic Klose (FRA)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Champ: Vivian Harris (GUY)
1. Souleyman M'Baye (FRA)
2. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
3. Ricky Hatton (GB)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Randall Bailey (USA)
6. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
7. Khalid Rahilou (FRA)
8. Arturo Gatti (USA)
9. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
10. Zab Judah (USA)
11. Ener Julio (COL)
12. Masakazu Satake (JAP)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Leonard Dorin (CAN)
1. Miguel Callist (PAN)
2. Lakva Sim (MON)
3. Juan Lazcano (USA)
4. Raul Balbi (ARG)
5. Steve Johnston (USA)
6. Juan Gomez-Trinidad (PR)
7. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
8. Angel Manfredy (USA)
9. Edson Xuxa Nascimento (BRA)
10. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
11. Victoriano Sosa (DR)
12. Orlando Salido (MEX)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Acelino Freitas (BRA)
Champ: Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)
1. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
2. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
3. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
4. Phillip Ndou (SA)
5. Daniel Attah (NIG)
6. Jose Miguel Cotto (PR)
7. Silvano Usini (ITA)
8. Carlos Hernandez (SAL)
9. Jesus Chavez (MEX)
10. Nate Campbell (USA)
11. Yong Soo Choi (KOR)
12. Randy Suico (PHIL)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Derrick Gainer (USA)
1. Daniel Seda (PR)
2. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
3. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
4. Naseem Hamed (GB)
5. Injin Chi (KOR)
6. Antonio Cermeno (VEN)
7. Lewis Woods (US)
8. Chris John (IND)
9. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
10. Spend Abazi (DEN)
11. Victor Polo (COL)
12. Oscar Leon (COL)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
1. Vacant
2. Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (THAI)
3. Yober Ortega (VEN)
4. Osamu Sato (JAP)
5. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
6. Somsak Sithchachawan (THAI)
7. Johnny Armour (GB)
8. Paulie Ayala (USA)
9. Michael Brodie (GB)
10. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
11. Napapol Kiattisachokchai (THAI)
12. Israel Vasquez (MEX)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
1. Vacant
2. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
3. Eidy Moya (VEN)
4. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
5. Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)
6. Leo Gamez (VEN)
7. Jose Rojas (VEN)
8. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
9. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
10. Moises Castro (NIC)
11. Poongsawat Krachingdaen (THAI)
12. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Alexander Munoz (VEN)
1. Vacant
2. Sornpichai Pisnurachank (THAI)
3. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
4. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
5. Luis Bolanos (COL)
6. Luis Perez (NIC)
7. Jesus Rojas (VEN)
8. Masayuki Arinaga (JAP)
9. Meiji C.P. Gym (THAI)
10. Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)
11. Sot Sor Veerapol (THAI)
12. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Morel (USA)
1. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
2. Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)
3. Damaen Kelly (GB)
4. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
5. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
6. Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)
7. Isidro Garcia (MEX)
8. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
9. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
10. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
11. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
12. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)
1. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
2. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
3. Pichit C. Siriwat (THAI)
4. Alex Sanchez (PR)
5. Edgar Velasquez (VEN)
6. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
7. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
8. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
9. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
10. Tatsuo Kayashida (JAP)
11. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)
12. Kazuo Okada (JAP)

MINIMUMWEIGHTS
Champ: Noel Arambulet (VEN)
1. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
2. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
3. Khulile Makeba (SA)
4. Katzunari Takayama (JAP)
5. Daniel Reyes (COL)
6. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
7. Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)
8. Manasak Yootthakit (THAI)
9. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
10. Pornsawan Pramuk (THAI)
11. Wandee Charoen (THAI)
12. Juan Landaeta (VEN)

WBC RATINGS
(Ratings as of January 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Lennox Lewis (GB)
1. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
2. Hasim Rahman (USA)
3. Evander Holyfield (USA)
4. Mike Tyson (USA)
5. David Tua (NZ)
6. Lamon Brewster (USA)
7. Danny Williams (GB)
8. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
9. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)
10. Fres Oquendo (USA)
11. Clifford Etienne (USA)
12. Michael Grant (USA)
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24. DaVarryl Williamson (USA)
25. Timo Hoffman (GB)
26. Tim Witherspoon (USA)
27. Dimitry Bakhtov (KAZ)
28. Nikolay Valouev (RUS)
29. George Kandelaki (GEO)
30. Cedric Boswell (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
1. O'Neil Bell (USA)
2. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
3. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
4. Louis Azille (DR)
5. James Toney (USA)
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25. Vincenzo Rossitto (ITA)
26. Jason Robinson (USA)
27. Mohamed Ben Guesmia (ALG)
28. Grigory Drozd (RUS)
29. Roman Kovalchuk (UKR)
30. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Montell Griffin (USA)
3. Clinton Woods (GB)
4. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
5. Jorge Castro (ARG)
6. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
7. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
8. Eric Harding (USA)
9. Derrick Harmon (USA)
10. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
11. Kamel Amrane (FRA)
12. Stipe Drews (CRO)
13. Tomasz Adamek (POL)
14. David Telesco (USA)
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16. Silvio Branco (ITA)
17. George Jones (USA)
18. Orlando Rivera (PR)
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25. Zsolt Erdei (HUN)
26. Rodney Moore (USA)
27. Daniel Judah (USA)
28. Rodney Toney (USA)
29. Michael Rush (USA)
30. Ron Simms (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Eric Lucas (CAN)
1. Markus Beyer (GER)
2. David Starie (GB)
3. Antwun Echols (USA)
4. Danilo Haussler (GER)
5. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
6. Mads Larsen (DEN)
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16. Danny Green (AUSTRL)
17. Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
18. Mario Veit (GER)
19. Robin Reid (GB)
20. Jeff Lacy (USA)
21. Brian Magee (GB)
22. Kabary Salem (EGY)
23. Nordin Ben Salah (HOL)
24. Andre Thysse (SA)
25. James Lubwana (UGA)
26. Jean Paul Mendy (FRA)
27. Enrique Ornelas (USA)
28. Victor Oganov (RUS)
29. Charles Adamu (GHA)
30. Jerson Ravelo (USA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
2. Erland Betare (FRA)
3. Robert Allen (USA)
4. Antonio Perugino (ITA)
5. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
6. Raul Marquez (USA)
7. Howard Eastman (GB)
8. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
9. Alejandro Berrio (COL)
10. Aslan Kodzoev (RUS)
11. Oure Evans (KEN)
12. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
13. Raymond Joval (HOL)
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26. Marcos Silvano Diaz (ARG)
27. Jermain Taylor (USA)
28. Satoru Suzuki (JAP)
29. Bert Schenk (GER)
30. Maselino Masoe (NZ)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
Interim Champ: Javier Castillejo (SPA)
1. Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)
2. Nader Hamdan (AUSTR
3. Roman Karmazin (RUS
4. Wayne Alexander (GB)
5. Akira Ohigashi (JAP)
6. Kassim Ouma (USA)
7. Michael Rask (DEN)
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9. Mihaly Kotai (HUN)
10. J.C. Candelo (COL)
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29. Yuri Tsarenko (RUS)
30. Armando Velardez (MEX

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Ricardo Mayorga (NI
1. Vernon Forrest (USA)
2. Shane Mosley (USA)
3. Thomas Damgaard (DEN
4. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
5. Manuel Gomez (MEX)
6. Alexander Vetoux (UKR)
7. Cory Spinks (USA)
8. Rafael Pineda (COL)
9. Hiroshi Watanabe (JAP)
10. Michel Trabant (GER)
11. Jose Luis Cruz (MEX)
12. Andrew Lewis (GUY)
13. Jawaid Khaliq (GB)
14. Miguel Rodriguez (MEX
15. Michele Orlando (ITA)
16. Rev Santillan (PHIL)
17. Teddy Reid (USA)
18. Paolo Roberto (SWE)
19. Christian Bladt (DEN)
20. James Hare (GB)
21. Felix Flores (PR)
22. Joseph Makaringe (SA)
23. Neil Sinclair (GB)
24. Eduardo Bejarano (ARG)
25. Sam Garr (USA)
26. Carlos Quintana (PR)
27. Sergio Martinez (ARG)
28. Kermit Cintron (USA)
29. Riad Menasria (ALG)
30. Hector Quiroz (MEX)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTR
1. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
2. Ricky Hatton (GB)
3. Arturo Gatti (CAN)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Zab Judah (USA)
6. Omar Weis (ARG)
7. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
8. Micky Ward (USA)
9. Miguel Cotto (PR)
10. Masakazu Satake (JAP)
11. James Leija (USA)
12. Hector Camacho Jr. (PR)
13. Eamonn Magee (GB)
14. Muhammad Abdullaev (U
15. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
16. Soulemane M'Baye (FRA)
17. Ricardo Williams (USA)
18. Cesar Bazan (MEX)
19. Ener Julio (COL)
20. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB
21. Junior Witter (GB)

22. Ben Tackie (GHA)
23. Cosme Rivera (MEX)
24. Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)
25. Kelson Pinto (BRA)
26. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
27. Gabriel Mapuoka (FRA)
28. Yuhi Tadashi (JAP)
29. Allan Vester (DEN)
30. Pablo Sarmiento (ARG)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Floyd Mayweather (USA)
1. Juan Lazcano (USA)
2. Steve Johnston (USA)
3. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
4. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
5. Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)
6. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
7. Dennis Laurente (PHIL)
8. Jason Cook (GB)
9. David Burke (GB)
10. Juan Diaz (MEX)
11. Yuri Romanov (UKR)
12. Aldo Rios (ARG)
13. Julio Diaz (USA)
14. Bobby Vanzie (GB)
15. Carlos Gerena (PR)
16. Colin Dunne (GB)
17. Alex Trujillo (PR)
18. Leavander Johnson (USA)
19. Miguel Callist (PAN)
20. Efren Hinojosa (MEX)
21. Cristian Bejarano (MEX)
22. Steve Quinonez (USA)
23. Julian Wheeler (USA)
24. Steve Forbes (USA)
25. Michael Clark (USA)
26. Sayan Sanchat (RUS)
27. Juan Carlos Diaz (SPA)
28. Laszlo Herczeg (HUN)
29. Ricardo Silva (ARG)
30. Eliecer Contreras (USA)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)
1. Jesus Chavez (USA)
2. Philip Ndou (SA)
3. Randy Suico (PHIL)
4. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
5. Affif Djelti (FRA)
6. Daniel Attah (NIG)
7. Mzonke Fana (SA)
8. Nate Campbell (USA)
9. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
10. Nobuto Honmo (JAP)
11. Fernando Trejo (MEX)
12. Kevin Kelley (USA)
13. Ryuhei Sugita (JAP)
14. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
15. Miguel Angel Huerta (MEX)
16. Orlando Salido (MEX)
17. Jorge Paez (MEX)
18. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
19. Yongsoo Choi (KOR)
20. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
21. Boris Sinitsin (RUS)
22. Pedro Miranda (SPA)
23. Mike Anchondo (USA)
24. Daniel Alicea (PR)
25. Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)
26. Alex Arthur (GB)
27. Wilfredo Vazquez (PR)
28. Lamar Murphy (USA)
29. Bobby Pacquiao(PHIL)
30. Silvano Usini (ITA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Erik Morales (MEX)
1. Injin Chi (KOR)
2. Michael Brodie (GB)
3. Naseem Hamed (GB)
4. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
5. Wayne McCullough (IRE)
6. Manuel Calvo (SPA)
7. William Abelyan (USA)
8. Guty Espadas (MEX)
9. Luis Fuentes (MEX)
10. Spend Abazi (DEN)
11. Takalani Noluvo (SA)
12. Zahir Raheem (USA)
13. Juan Carlos Ramirez (MEX)
14. Rocky Juarez (USA)
15. Cyril Thomas (FRA)
16. Fernando Velardez (MEX)
17. Oscar Leon (COL)
18. David Murillo (MEX)
19. Yangsoo Sung (KOR)
20. Angel Chacon (PR)
21. Juan Gerardo Cabrera (ARG)
22. Hector Velazquez (MEX)
23. George Priest Smalls (USA)
24. Frankie Toledo (USA)
25. Dainoshin Kuma (JAP)
26. Choi Tseveenpurev (MON)
27. Valdemir Pereira (BRA)
28. Santiago Rojas (SPA)
29. Gavin Rees (GB)
30. Ruben Estanislao (MEX)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Oscar Larios (MEX)
1. Kiattisak Chocchoi (THAI)
2. Israel Vazquez (MEX)
3. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
4. Paulie Ayala (USA)
5. Shigeru Nakazato (JAP)
6. Willie Jorrin (USA)
7. Osamu Sato (JAP)
8. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
9. Juhichi Watanabe (JAP)
10. Emmanuel Lucero (USA)
11. Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)
12. Akihiro Kanai (JAP)
13. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
14. David Donis (USA)
15. Marcos Licona (MEX)
16. Jose Rojas (VEN)
17. Manabu Fukushima (JAP)
18. Jilrex Laca (PHIL)
19. Masakazu Sugawara (JAP)
20. Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)
21. Youngjin Cho (KOR)
22. Bones Adams (USA)
23. Vincenzo Gigliotti (ITA)
24. Jaekwang Chung (KOR)
25. Alejandro Barrera (MEX)
26. Michael Alldis (GB)
27. Wethya Singwangcha (THAI)
28. Yober Ortega (VEN)
29. Hector Julio Avila (DR)
30. Martin Honorio (MEX)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)
1. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
2. Diego Morales (MEX)
3. Noel Wilders (GB)
4. Jess Maca (PHIL)
5. Genaro Garcia (USA)
6. David Guerault (FRA)
7. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
8. Julio Zarate (MEX)
9. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
10. Mark Johnson (USA)
11. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
12. Julio Gamboa (NIC)
13. Gerardo Martinez (MEX)
14. Jesus Perez (COL)
15. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)
16. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
17. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
18. Moises Castro (NIC)
19. Steve Molitor (CAN)
20. Fabien Guillerme (FRA)
21. Jorge Lacierva (MEX)
22. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
23. Eidy Moya (VEN)
24. Johnny Armour (GB)
25. Daniel Ponce (MEX)
26. Hozumi Hasegawa (JAP)
27. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
28. Silence Mabuza (SA)
29. Nicky Booth (GB)
30. Johnny Lear (PHIL)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Masanori Tokuyama (JAP)
1. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
2. Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)
3. Luis Bolano (COL)
4. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
5. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
6. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
7. Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)
8. Jose Beranza (MEX)
9. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
10. Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)
11. Felix Machado (VEN)
12. Valerio Sanchez (MEX)
13. Oscar Andrade (MEX)
14. Masayuki Arinaga (JAP)
15. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
16. Jose Navarro (USA)
17. Sasha Baktin (RUS)
18. Peter Culshaw (GB)
19. Karim Quibir (SPA)
20. Sergio Santillan (ARG)
21. Shin Ogata (JAP)
22. Erick Lopez (MEX)
23. Martin Castillo (MEX)
24. Lunga Ntontela (SA)
25. Simphewe Khandisa (SA)
26. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)
27. Waenpetch Chuwatana (THAI)
28. Carlos Madrigal (USA)
29. Eduardo Pacheco (COL)
30. Rolando Gerongco (PHIL)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)
1. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
2. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
3. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
4. Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)
5. Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)
6. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
7. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
8. Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
9. Brian Viloria (USA)
10. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
11. Damaen Kelly (GB)
12. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
13. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
14. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
15. Rolly Lunas (PHIL)
16. Koji Koyama (JAP)
17. Mimoun Chent (FRA)
18. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
19. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
20. Ivan Hernandez (MEX)
21. Hayato Asai (JAP)
22. Yusuke Morishima (JAP)
23. Gabriel Elizondo (USA)
24. Ramses Patterson (USA)
25. Jose Araiza (MEX)
26. Jose Lopez Bueno (SPA)
27. Jason Booth (GB)
28. Ever Briseno (NIC)
29. Angel Priolo (COL)
30. Glenn Donaire (PHIL)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Jorge Arce (MEX)
1. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
2. Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)
3. Yosam Choi (KOR)
4. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
5. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
6. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
7. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
8. Victor Burgos (MEX)
9. Rafael Lozano (SPA)
10. Agustin Luna (MEX)
11. Manuel Vargas (MEX)
12. Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)
13. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
14. Edgar Cardenas (MEX)
15. Ernesto Castro (NIC)
16. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
17. Alex Sanchez (PR)
18. Masato Hatakeyama (JAP)
19. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)
20. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
21. Roberto Vazquez (PAN)
22. Hugo Cazares (MEX)
23. Nerys Espinoza (NIC)
24. Juan Centeno (NIC)
25. Katsunari Takayama (JAP)
26. Rodrigo Garcia (MEX)
27. Steve Msimango (SA)
28. Jun Kitano (JAP)
29. Liborio Romero (MEX)
30. Samransak Singmanassuk (THAI)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Champ: Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)
1. Khulile Makeba (SA)
2. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
3. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
4. Sarikalek O. Eakarin (THAI)
5. Eagle Okuda (JAP)
6. Heriberto Gijon (PHIL)
7. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
8. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
9. Hiroyuki Abe (JAP)
10. Juan Palacios (NIC)
11. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
12. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
13. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
14. Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)
15. Juan Alfonso Keb Baas (MEX)
16. Ki-Moon Na (KOR)
17. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
18. Yutaka Niida (JAP)
19. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
20. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
21. Makoto Suzuki (JAP)
22. Sizwe Sinyabi (SA)
23. Ulises Solis (MEX)
24. Manasak Yootthakit (THAI)
25. Omar Soto (MEX)
26. Namchai Ratanachaigym (THAI)
27. Pornsawan Porpramook (THAI)
28. Ayanda Ramncwana (SA)
29. Ivan Calderon (PR)
30. Oledong Sithsanerchai (THAI)

IBF RATINGS
(Ratings as of January 2003)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Chris Byrd (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. David Tua (NZ)
4. Hasim Rahman (USA)
5. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
6. Fres Oquendo (USA)
7. Clifford Etienne (USA)
8. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
9. Lou Savarese (USA)
10. Maurice Harris (USA)
11. Lamon Brewster (USA)
12. Evander Holyfield (USA)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
1. James Toney (USA)
2. Vacant
3. O'Neil Bell (USA)
4. Virgil Hill (USA)
5. Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
6. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
7. Ravea Springs (USA)
8. Jason Robinson (USA)
9. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
10. Kelvin Davis (USA)
11. Dale Brown (CAN)
12. Krysztof Wlodarczyk (POL)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Montell Griffin (USA)
4. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
5. Derrick Harmon (USA)
6. Eric Harding (USA)
7. Jorge Castro (ARG)
8. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
9. David Telesco (USA)
10. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
11. Reggie Johnson (USA)
12. Clinton Woods (GB)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
1. Antwun Echols (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Danilo Haussler (GER)
5. David Starie (GB)
6. Charles Brewer (USA)
7. Markus Beyer (GER)
8. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
9. Glenn Catley (GB)
10. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
11. Thomas Tate (USA)
12. Mario Veit (GER)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Robert Allen (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Carl Daniels (USA)
4. Erland Betare (FRA)
5. Howard Eastman (GB)
6. Raymond Joval (HOL)
7. Bert Schenk (GER)
8. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
9. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
10. Antonio Perugino (ITA)
11. Jermain Taylor (USA)
12. Fernando Hernandez (USA)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Winky Wright (USA)
1. J.C. Candelo (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Andrei Pestriaev (RUS)
4. Alex Bunema (USA)
5. Bronco McKart (USA)
6. Emmett Linton (USA)
7. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
8. Angel Hernandez (USA)
9. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
10. Travis Simms (USA)
11. Mikael Rask (DEN)
12. Rhoshii Wells (USA)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
1. Cory Spinks (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
4. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)
5. James Hare (ENG)
6. Shane Mosley (USA)
7. Rafael Pineda (COL)
8. Jose Rivera (USA)
9. Jose Celaya (USA)
10. Antonio Diaz (MEX)
11. Kermit Cintron (USA)
12. Robert Frazier (USA)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
1. Arturo Gatti (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Emanuel Augustus (USA)
4. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
5. Zab Judah (USA)
6. Sharmba Mitchell (USA)
7. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
8. Micky Ward (USA)
9. Ben Tackie (GHA)
10. Carlos Vilches (ARG)
11. Omar Weis (ARG)
12. James Leija (USA)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Paul Spadafora (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Leavander Johnson (USA)
3. Angel Manfredy (USA)
4. Javier Jauregui (MEX)
5. Victoriano Sosa (DR)
6. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
7. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
8. Juan Lazcano (USA)
9. Steve Johnston (USA)
10. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
11. Julio Diaz (USA)
12. Lamar Murphy (USA)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Steve Forbes (USA)
2. David Santos (USA)
3. Jesus Chavez (USA)
4. Carlos Hernandez (USA)
5. Joel Casamayor (USA)
6. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
7. Nate Campbell (USA)
8. Phillip Ndou (SA)
9. Daniel Attah (USA)
10. Orlando Salido (MEX)
11. Daniel Alicea (USA)
12. Kevin Kelley (USA)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
2. Manuel Medina (MEX)
3. Oscar Leon (PR)
4. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
5. Frankie Toledo (USA)
6. Johnny Tapia (USA)
7. Michael Brodie (ENG)
8. William Abelyan (USA)
9. Victor Polo (COL)
10. Paulie Ayala (USA)
11. Guty Espadas (USA)
12. Zahir Raheem (USA)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)
4. Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)
5. Fernando Velardez (USA)
6. Diego Morales (MEX)
7. Jorge Eliecer Julio (COL)
8. Enrique Sanchez (MEX)
9. F. Rakkiatgym (THAI)
10. David Donis (USA)
11. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
12. Walter Estrada (COL)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Tim Austin (USA)
1. Rafael Marquez (MEX)
2. Vacant
3. Pete Frissina (USA)
4. Jesus Perez (COL)
5. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
6. Roger Gonzalez (USA)
7. David Guerault (FRA)
8. Adan Vargas (MEX)
9. Ratanachai Vorapin (THAI)
10. Jose Aguiniga (USA)
11. Hugo Dianzo (MEX)
12. Fahsung 3K Battery (THAI)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Luis Perez (NIC)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Martin Castillo (MEX)
4. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
5. Luis Bolano (COL)
6. Felix Machado (VEN)
7. Adonis Rivas (NIC)
8. Peter Culshaw (ENG)
9. Julio Coronell (MEX)
10. Yani Malhendo (JAP)
11. Saen Sor Ploenchit (THAI)
12. Jesus Rojas (VEN)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Irene Pacheco (COL)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Damaen Kelly (GB)
4. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
5. Hussein Hussein (LEB)
6. Wandee Chareon (THAI)
7. Masaki Nakanuma (JAP)
8. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
9. Randy Mangubat (PHIL)
10. Isidro Garcia (MEX)
11. Vic Darchinian (AUSTRL)
12. Angel Priolo (COL)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Jose Burgos (MEX)
2. Alexander Sanchez (PR)
3. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
4. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
5. Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)
6. Juan Keb Baas (MEX)
7. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
8. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
9. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
10. Peter Culshaw (ENG)
11. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
12. Vic Darchinian (AUSTRL)

MINI FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Miguel Barrera (MEX)
1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Daniel Reyes (COL)
4. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
5. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
6. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
7. Ivan Calderon (PR)
8. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
9. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
10. Muhammad Rachman (INDO)
11. Sarikalrk Ekarin (THAI)
12. Joma Gamboa (PHIL)

CLASSIC

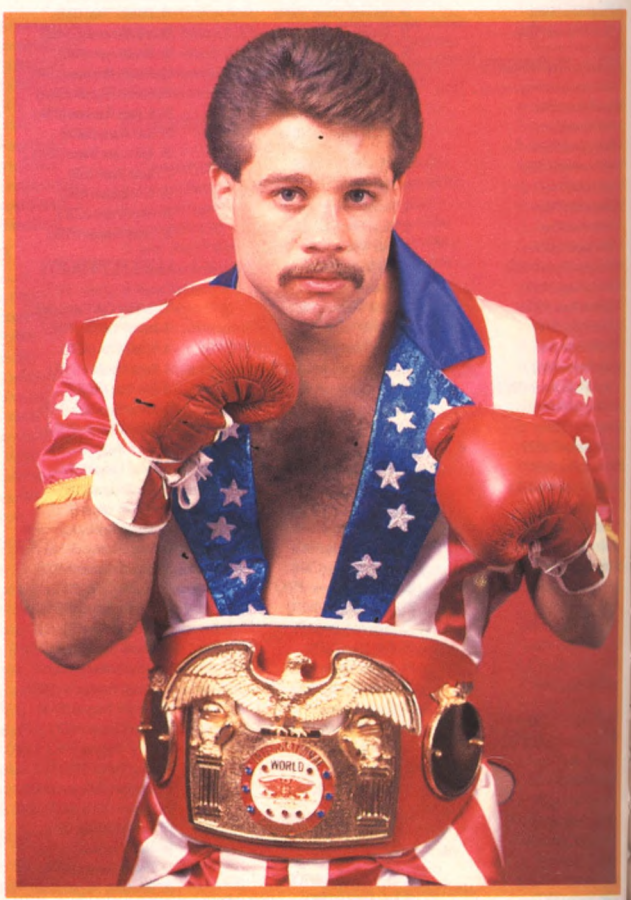
From The Ring, February 1990

GOING THE DISTANCE

Bobby Czyz Boxes With The Shadows Of His Past

"I don't break the 11th commandment. I don't bulls_ _ _ myself" —Bobby Czyz

By Jeff Ryan



Bobby Czyz, all black tie and tales, saunters from table to table, mingling with the regulars at La Cucina, an Italian restaurant in the yuppie enclave of Somerville, New Jersey. In his pocket are some clean ashtrays, in his hand, some menus, on his lips, stories of The Great White Hunter. No, not reminiscences of his ring days, but tales of countless hours in the North Jersey woodlands, when he was unable to move a muscle for fear of scaring off a four-point buck. One wrong move at the wrong time, Czyz explains to a table of diners, could be costly.

It's really no different in the job of restaurant host, either, especially when you've discovered that the muscles you've been building in the first few months of a weightlifting program are making some unrealistic demands on the fibers of your tuxedo. Yesterday, Czyz took a step in the wrong direction and turned a three-piece $1,200 silk suit into a four-piece suit of quite a bit less value. For a guy whose only compensation for 10 to 12 hours on the job each day is an order of lasagna or veal parmigiana, a guy who gives all the tips he receives to the waitresses, going to work can become an expensive proposition.

It's a good thing Czyz isn't spending most of his waking hours at La Cucina in the hope of

Bobby Czyz thought about the restaurant business after retiring from the ring. Wearing a tightly fitted tuxedo, Czyz did everything from seating customers to mixing drinks to bussing tables.

becoming rich. Well, at least not just yet. His self-imposed two-month restaurant training course, during which he'll do everything from seating customers and taking reservations, to mixing drinks and bussing tables, is designed to prepare him for the opening of his own restaurant next year at a yet-undetermined site in New Jersey.

"I'm looking for something that keeps me involved with people," he explains after the lunch-hour flood of humanity has finally slowed to a trickle. "A good restaurant makes a nice buck, too. I've been acquainted with many restaurateurs, close friends of mine, and I've been in many restaurants around the world on vacation. I've come to like it. If I can get people in my place, I'll keep 'em there. Like I did in boxing, I'll give it my all."

Czyz retired from active combat in March, immediately following a 10th-round stoppage loss to IBF light heavyweight titlist Prince Charles Williams. There was no formal announcement. No press conference. Just a small party for family and friends at Baja, a Manhattan nightspot. Of course, a few surprise guests managed to drop by. Artist LeRoy Neiman and some of hockey's New Jersey Devils, to name a few.

"Boy George was there, too," Czyz says with a face of amazement before taking pains to emphasize, "Not that I'm acquainted with *that*."

When the last few diners have paid their checks and the afternoon lull has set in, Czyz sits down at a table along the wall and removes his jacket. He looks like a prisoner who has just been unshackled.

"You know, I really like wearing a tux," he whispers, "But not every f___ing day."

There was a time when he would have killed to wear a tux. That was on May 8, 1980, the night of the Lakeland (New Jersey) Regional High School senior prom, a night Czyz spent wearing a pair of trunks and putting his head on the shoulder of Jamal Arbubakar, instead of one of Lakeland's cheerleaders. It was Czyz' second pro fight, but perhaps the first real sign many of those close to him had that his infatuation with boxing was more than an after-school hobby.

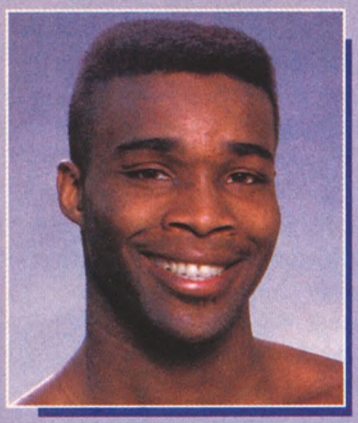
It soon became clear that Czyz was much different from other fighters. Not because of the "matinee idol" label NBC affixed to him, not because of the heart he displayed in battle, but because of his head. Graduating sixth in his class of 335, and with acceptance letters from Arizona State, Seton Hall, and Rutgers sitting on the same dresser top in his room as his amateur boxing trophies, Czyz had options. Logic dictated that he didn't have to get hit in the face for a living.

"Some people are forced to fight from day one just to survive," he once said. "Mine is a temporary game that's only going to last as long as I want it to. Or as long as I'm good at it."

Czyz' game actually lasted much longer than his skills did, which only goes to prove that the would-be pre-med student is as vulnerable to the grasp of the fight game's tentacles as is the uneducated ghetto tough. His career, which stretched over 39 bouts (34 of them victories), unfolded in two distinct acts: Act One was the middleweight tragedy, capped off by a heartbreaking prime-time defeat to Mustafa Hamsho in '82. Act Two was the light heavyweight saga, highlighted by a capturing of the IBF light heavyweight

Czyz retired after suffering a 10th-round stoppage loss to IBF light heavyweight titlist Prince Charles Williams in March 1989. Czyz made no formal announcement, just enjoyed a small party with friends.

THE RING RATINGS, February 1990



Michael Nunn

HEAVYWEIGHTS
1. **Mike Tyson,** Catskill, NY
2. **Evander Holyfield,** Atlanta, GA
3. **Orlin Norris,** Campo, CA
4. **Michael Dokes,** Las Vegas, NV
5. **Francesco Damiani,** Italy
6. **Tim Witherspoon,** Philadelphia, PA
7. **Buster Douglas,** Columbus, OH
8. **Carl Williams,** White Plains, NY
9. **Razor Ruddock,** Canada
10. **Gary Mason,** England

CRUISERWEIGHTS
1. **Carlos DeLeon,** Puerto Rico
2. **Taoufik Balbouli,** France
3. **Dwight Muhammad Qawi,** Cherry Hill, NJ
4. **Glenn McCrory,** England
5. **Nate Miller,** Philadelphia, PA
6. **Patrick Lumumba,** Kenya
7. **Sammy Reeson,** England
8. **Robert Daniels,** Miami, FL
9. **Craig Bodzianowski,** Chicago, IL
10. **Anaclet Wamba,** France

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
1. **Virgil Hill,** Las Vegas, NV
2. **Prince Charles Williams,** Broomall, PA
3. **Michael Moorer,** Detroit, MI
4. **Jeff Harding,** Australia
5. **Frankie Swindell,** Houston, TX
6. **Dennis Andries,** Detroit, MI
7. **Leslie Stewart,** Trinidad & Tobago
8. **Joe Lasisi,** Las Vegas, NV
9. **Mike Sedillo,** Chino, CA
10. **Uriah Grant,** Miami Beach, FL

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
1. **Ray Leonard,** Potomac, MD
2. **Thomas Hearns,** Las Vegas, NV
3. **Frank Tate,** Houston, TX
4. **In Chul Baek,** South Korea
5. **Christophe Tiozzo,** France
6. **James Kinchen,** San Diego, CA
7. **Tony Byrd,** Los Angeles, CA
8. **Tarmo Usivirta,** Finland
9. **Fulgencio Obelmejias,** Venezuela
10. **Victor Cordova,** Panama

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
1. **Michael Nunn,** Los Angeles, CA
2. **Roberto Duran,** Miami, FL
3. **Sumbu Kalambay,** Italy
4. **Mike McCallum,** Brooklyn, NY
5. **Iran Barkley,** Bronx, NY
6. **Michael Watson,** England
7. **Herol Graham,** England
8. **Michael Olajide,** New York, NY
9. **Steve Collins,** Brockton, MA
10. **Karama Leota,** Napa, CA

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
1. **Julian Jackson,** Virgin Islands
2. **John Mugabi,** Tampa, FL
3. **Gianfranco Rosi,** Italy
4. **Darrin Van Horn,** Lexington, KY
5. **John David Jackson,** Detroit, MI
6. **Terry Norris,** Campo, CA
7. **Robert Hines,** Philadelphia, PA
8. **Rene Jacquot,** France
9. **Donald Curry,** Fort Worth, TX
10. **Lupe Aquino,** Santa Paula, CA

WELTERWEIGHTS
1. **Marlon Starling,** South Windsor, CT
2. **Simon Brown,** Washington, D.C.
3. **Lloyd Honeyghan,** England
4. **Mark Breland,** Brooklyn, NY
5. **Tyrone Trice,** Detroit, MI
6. **Maurice Blocker,** Washington, D.C.
7. **Buddy McGirt,** Brentwood, NY
8. **Fujio Ozaki,** Japan
9. **Glenwood Brown,** Plainfield, NJ
10. **Aaron Davis,** Bronx, NY

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
1. **Julio Cesar Chavez,** Mexico
2. **Meldrick Taylor,** Philadelphia, PA
3. **Juan Coggi,** Argentina
4. **Roger Mayweather,** Las Vegas, NV
5. **Sammy Fuentes,** Puerto Rico
6. **Ras-I Bramble,** Hampton Township, NJ
7. **Loreto Garza,** Sacramento, CA
8. **Hector Camacho,** Big Cypress, FL
9. **Frankie Randall,** Morristown, TN
10. **Vinny Pazienza,** Cranston, RI

LIGHTWEIGHTS
1. **Pernell Whitaker,** Norfolk, VA
2. **Edwin Rosario,** Puerto Rico
3. **Greg Haugen,** Henderson, NV
4. **Jose Luis Ramirez,** Mexico
5. **Freddie Pendleton,** Miami, FL
6. **John Duplessis,** New Orleans, LA
7. **Tracy Spann,** Plainfield, NJ
8. **David Gonzales,** San Jose, CA
9. **Louie Lomeli,** Melrose Park, IL
10. **Chil Sung Chun,** South Korea

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
1. **Azumah Nelson,** Ghana
2. **Brian Mitchell,** South Africa
3. **John-John Molina,** Puerto Rico
4. **Tony Lopez,** Sacramento, CA
5. **Lupe Suarez,** Corpus Christi, TX
6. **Mario Martinez,** Mexico
7. **Genaro Hernandez,** Los Angeles, CA
8. **Calvin Grove,** Pottstown, PA
9. **Juan Laporte,** New York, NY
10. **Rocky Lockridge,** Mount Laurel, NJ

FEATHERWEIGHTS
1. **Antonio Esparragoza,** Venezuela
2. **Jeff Fenech,** Australia
3. **Jorge Paez,** Mexico
4. **Mauricio Stecca,** Italy
5. **Marcos Villasana,** Mexico
6. **Georgie Navarro,** Vineland, NJ
7. **Lupe Gutierrez,** San Jose, CA
8. **Louie Espinoza,** Phoenix, AZ
9. **Troy Dorsey,** Dallas, TX
10. **Ricardo Cepeda,** Bronx, NY

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
1. **Daniel Zaragoza,** Mexico
2. **Juan Jose Estrada,** Mexico
3. **Seung Hoon Lee,** South Korea
4. **Fabrice Benichou,** France
5. **Kenny Mitchell,** Houston, TX
6. **Pedro Decima,** Argentina
7. **Paul Banke,** Quail Valley, CA
8. **Jose Sanabria,** Venezuela
9. **Miguel Lora,** Colombia
10. **Jesus Salud,** San Diego, CA

BANTAMWEIGHTS
1. **Raul Perez,** Mexico
2. **Orlando Canizales,** Laredo, TX
3. **Kaokor Galaxy,** Thailand
4. **Gerardo Martinez,** San Jose, CA
5. **Israel Contreras,** Venezuela
6. **Moon Sung Kil,** South Korea
7. **Kelvin Seabrooks,** Charlotte, NC
8. **Fernie Morales,** Mexico
9. **Hurley Snead,** Detroit, MI
10. **Wilfredo Vasquez,** Puerto Rico

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS
1. **Gilberto Roman,** Mexico
2. **Khaosai Galaxy,** Thailand
3. **Elly Pical,** Indonesia
4. **Jose Ruiz,** Puerto Rico
5. **Santos Laciar,** Argentina
6. **Rolando Bohol,** Philippines
7. **Thanomsak Sithbaobey,** Thailand
8. **Yong Heun Lee,** South Korea
9. **Cobra Ari Blanca,** Philippines
10. **Shunichi Nakajima,** Japan

FLYWEIGHTS
1. **Sot Chitutalada,** Thailand
2. **Jesus Rojas,** Venezuela
3. **Fidel Bassa,** Colombia
4. **Jung Koo Chang,** South Korea
5. **Dave McAuley,** Ireland
6. **Yong Kang Kim,** South Korea
7. **Duke McKenzie,** England
8. **Ramon Medel,** San Antonio, TX
9. **Ho Choi Chang,** South Korea
10. **Dodie Penalosa,** Philippines

crown from Slobodan Kacar in '86 and three successful defenses, but ending with four losses in his final six bouts.

"My body seemed to have slowed down just a notch," he says of his last two years in the game, a period that saw him floored in a win over Leslie Stewart, outpointed by Dennis Andries and Virgil Hill, and twice stopped by Williams. "That fine edge was missing. It's like a baseball player in the outfield. A guy hits a line drive that falls six feet in front of him. It's not an error, and it doesn't look like a lack of effort, but only he knows that two years earlier, he would have caught that ball. I didn't want to be a boxer who hung around doing dumb things, picking up loose change."

Though Czyz owns a house in Wanaque, New Jersey, and has invested in annuities and tax-free bonds, he says his finances "could be better." Tens of thousands have been spent on what he calls "the toys," fancy cars, the $1,200 silk suits, the diamond rings on his hands, fur coats, and vacations that cost up to $10,000 a week. "The restaurant will make me money," he says. "What the cerebral side of me is doing is opening a business that will be here for years to come."

If Czyz' arrival into boxing was a victory of the heart over the head, then retirement represents a triumph of the head over the heart. But the war between the two still wages on, long after the gym bag has been zipped shut and the sequined trunks have been packed away.

For although he is quick to acknowledge the dropoff in his performance in the last two years, he wonders if, "Maybe I just need a rest." He points out that two years away from boxing did wonders for Roberto Duran, then says candidly, "Deep down, I'd really like to maybe come back down the road. If someone said, 'Here's $10,000 to fight this guy, $15,000 for that guy, and if you win, you get 75,000,' well, kiss my ass. I'm not gonna give you 10 months of serious hard work for chump change when I can make that in three months in a restaurant and not get hit.

"But if I feel good when I go back in the gym, if there's a logical plan of attack and a big-money offer, I would come back. It's what I love."

He points to his smashed nose, the only alteration boxing has made to an otherwise handsome face. "Bottom line: When my nose is not flat anymore, when I fix it, then you know I'm retired for sure. As long as it's still flat, there is a chance Bobby Czyz is coming back."

Czyz' career fell under two different categories: Act One was a foray into the middleweight division, where Czyz suffered his first professional defeat, against Mustafa Hamsho in 1982 (top). Act Two was highlighted by Czyz capturing the IBF light heavyweight title from Slobodan Kacar in 1986 (above).

The temptation is certainly there. Though he has left boxing, Czyz can't seem to avoid the ring—of his telephone, that is. The offers have included a clash with powerhitting sensation Michael Moorer, a shot at WBC king Jeff Harding in the champ's native Australia, and a bout with the top-10 cruiserweight of his choice. Having bulked up to 200 pounds, Czyz says that if he returns, campaigning at any weight below cruiser is most unlikely.

"I could really break some balls by bodybuilding up to 220, and saying, 'Hey, Mike Tyson, do me a favor and make me rich,'" he says with a chuckle. "I teased him about it once. I said, 'Listen, I'm going up to 218 and I'm gonna come out of retirement for you.' Mike said, 'Why not, everybody else is making money off me.'"

Czyz reaches for a glass of water and spots the manager of La Cucina walking through the lobby. "How many guys we got on tonight?" Czyz calls out. Five, he is told. The work day started at 11 a.m. and won't end until 11 p.m. It's a fact of life Czyz knows he'll have to get used to in this business, but one he surely doesn't mind. If anything, he relishes it.

For the restaurant represents not just a future for Czyz, but an escape from the past, one that still haunts him continually. It has been more than six years since the day he walked downstairs in his family's house and found his father, Robert Sr.,

Czyz decided to call it quits when he lost four of his last six bouts. Czyz said his body just seemed to slow down a notch, and he suffered losses to Dennis Andries, Virgil Hill, and Williams.

dead of a self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head. The suicide put an end to a hellish life that Bobby, his mother, two brothers, and sister had been living.

The product of a broken home, Robert Czyz was obsessed with the idea of keeping his family intact, and in his own bizarre way of thinking, says Bobby, he physically abused them to show his love. The elder Czyz was an overbearing personality, a man unable to relax and have fun. Czyz attributes his success in boxing and the traits he most values in himself—his discipline, mental strength, and independence—to his father's influence. But he also blames his father for robbing him of his childhood.

"I can never remember a time when my whole family was together, my father included, and we all had a good time and were comfortable," he says. "That's sad. Learning the restaurant business has given me something to attack every day. The little things that still haunt me and give me unrest, for 12 hours a day, I can't pay attention to them. I need eight hours sleep, so there's only four hours left to pay attention to anything."

But even in sleep there is no peace. Czyz remains tortured by frequent nightmares, dreams in which his father often appears.

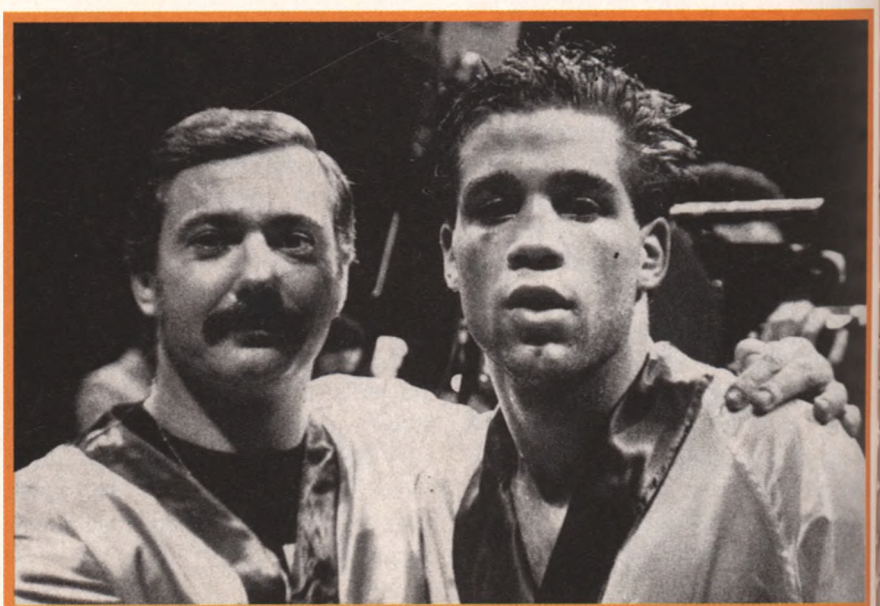
"I had one last week that was terrible," he relates. "They take different forms. There's flashbacks of beatings he gave me, him turning the house in turmoil. In many dreams he comes home and I try to explain to him that he's dead. He goes crazy and doesn't even acknowledge what I'm saying. He's walking, talking, and acting like he always did, but meanwhile, he has a hole in his head.

"I wake up in a cold sweat, crying. There's days I wake up crying and saying, 'I liked you better when you were dead,' because in the dream he's tearing the house apart, hitting my mother, throwing plates at my face. I wake up nuts. I hate it. But I gotta live with it. I can't reconcile anything. I can't say, 'I'm sorry.' He can't say, 'I'm sorry.' Hopefully, we'll see each other in another lifetime."

To this day, Czyz is discovering that he's haunted by his father in ways he never imagined. "He cost me some things after his death that he had no idea he could cost me," he says. Asked to elaborate, he pauses. "My fiancee. The single biggest regret I have. Nothing's ever affected me quite the way that did."

Czyz and Myra Zappia, a schoolteacher from Freehold, New Jersey, were engaged in May 1988 and scheduled to be married this past September. They broke up in January, in large part, Czyz says, because his fiancee couldn't tolerate the bad habits and codes of ethics Robert Czyz had instilled in his oldest son.

"I was overbearing, old school; the man's the man in the family and that's it," he says. "I would tell her something to the effect of, 'As time progresses, and we have decisions to make, if we can't compromise, it's my decision. Period.' It was just something my father taught me, and at



Robert Czyz, Bobby's father, was an abusive man who had an unusual way of showing affection for his family, Bobby said. The elder Czyz had an overbearing personality and eventually committed suicide. It was Czyz who found his father's body in the family home.

At the La Cucina restaurant, Czyz worked from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m., but it was a sacrifice Czyz was willing to take in the hopes of one day opening his own restaurant. Czyz, however, never ruled out the possibility of returning to the ring.

the time, it popped into my head and I thought it was right. I'd say, 'I'm the man, I'm bringing X-number of dollars into the house, and this is what I expect of you.' I didn't mean it that way, but ... By the time I came to realize what a good person I had, she was gone."

"Bobby was very much a man's man," Zappia said in a telephone interview. "I didn't get that idea when I first met him, but as time went on, the whole way that he was raised came out. I remember one time we had a discussion—it was really weird—about what kind of woman Bobby's father thought [Bobby] should be involved with. Like she should be a certain height 'cause it would make for taller children. His father was hung up on strange things. A lot of his influence was in Bobby. When I was going out with him, everything was very much *his* way or no way."

As Czyz speaks of the love he lost, his voice becomes soft, his eyes take on a faraway look. One senses that the hurt hasn't even begun to dissipate.

"I'm brighter than I showed in that relationship," he says. "I've changed a great deal since then. Even if it's not her, I just want to feel that way about someone again."

Czyz recently became involved in another relationship, one with quite a bit less passion, but a lot fewer arguments. He's also entertaining a series of TV commercial offers, and right now seems a good bet to land the analyst's job when Trump Sports and Entertainment, a new cable system, begins televising regular boxing cards from the Taj Mahal, Donald Trump's soon-to-open jewel on the Atlantic City Boardwalk. Czyz' roller-coaster life seems headed upward again.

As Czyz leans back in his chair, he notices that a family has just entered the restaurant. He quickly rises and leads them to a table, while a photographer trails the group every step of the way. As he hands the guests their menus, Czyz notices the bewildered expressions on their faces. "Oh," he says to them with a smile, "I used to be a boxer."

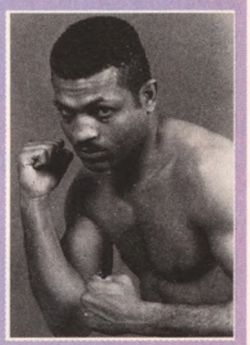
With that nose apparently a long way from being fixed, it's a safe bet they would have eventually figured it out for themselves. ■

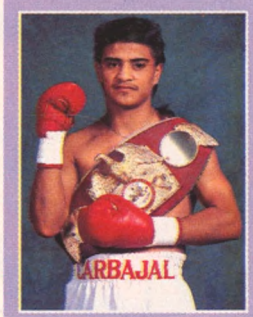
THE RING, February 1990

***The Cover*:** Mike Tyson was the main target of rising heavyweights with contrasting styles in the early-1990s: Ray Mercer, 1988 Olympic heavyweight gold medalist, had a powerful punch and was making quick progress as a professional, while Riddick Bowe, the '88 Olympic super heavyweight silver medalist, thought he could outbox his Brownsville, New York, buddy Tyson.

***Cooney Comeback*:** Gerry Cooney opted to end a 2½-year hiatus from the ring to take a purse reportedly close to $1-million to fight George Foreman. The last time "Gentleman Gerry" fought, Michael Spinks crushed him in five rounds in June '87. Cooney was looking for a fresh start after he had "got caught up in alcohol."

***Fresh Faced Vince*:** THE RING took notice of a "New Face" named Vince Phillips. The junior welterweight had been impressive in his first eight pro fights, stopping seven of his foes. Phillips eventually went on to hand Kostya Tszyu his first and only defeat in winning the IBF junior welterweight title seven years later.





***Colorful Look At Olympians As Pros*:** The '88 Olympic class was just starting to make some headway as pros, and THE RING took a colorful pictorial look at their progress. Included was Michael Carbajal, who began his pro career by stopping six of his first eight opponents and would become the first titlist of the '88 team.

***Fighter Of The Month*:** Antonio Esparragoza, the WBA featherweight titlist, retained the belt for the sixth time with a fifth-round blowout of Fili Montoya. Since winning the title from Stevie Cruz in March '87, Esparragoza had stopped five of his six challengers. He was looking to set up a showdown with WBC titlist Jeff Fenech or IBF beltholder Jorge Paez.

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

NETWORKS NEED TO CATCH ON

When THE RING instituted its new championship policy, I was the happiest boxing fan in the world, because there was finally a legitimate way to figure out who the genuine champions are. What bothers me is that THE RING title got no respect or recognition from networks when Marco Antonio Barrera and Johnny Tapia fought for the world featherweight title. I was telling all my friends about how there is only one champ per division now that THE RING set up its policy. I was upset because HBO was saying it was a non-title fight. I believe the networks have to give THE RING title more exposure and tell everybody THE RING belt is the only legitimate title. The average Joe needs to recognize who the real world champions are.

JOE IBARRA
Watsonville, CA

FORREST OVERRATED

When I think of all the boxers throughout history who made the pound-for-pound ratings, nobody was less deserving than Vernon Forrest—and his recent fight against Ricardo Mayorga proved it. With that in mind, can we finally take Vernon's name off the pound-for-pound list and put a more legitimate and worthy boxer in there?

The entire world thought Forrest was the next big thing. But Vernon beat only one great fighter, Shane Mosley, and that was after headbutting him in the first fight and clinching all night in the second. I personally found it an insult when I saw Forrest higher than Oscar De La Hoya on your pound-for-pound list. I thought you guys were crazy for that. Let's face it: Oscar has fought far more talented boxers than Vernon, and it pisses me off knowing so many writers, analysts, and so-called experts felt that Forrest could have beaten a very skillful technician like Oscar. A wild-swinging Mayorga showed otherwise.

TONY PETRISCH
Vestal, NY

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

There are differing opinions of Vernon Forrest's demise. Reader James Havdouglas wrote that Forrest will rebound from his shocking third-round knockout loss to Ricardo Mayorga, while reader Tony Petrisch thinks the defeat just proved that Forrest was never an elite fighter in the first place.

VERNON WILL GET HIS REVENGE

I was as shocked as most to see Vernon Forrest get knocked out. Not to take anything away from Ricardo Mayorga; he trained hard and stepped up to the plate. The shame lies with Vernon, who didn't take this guy seriously. But I believe Forrest will get a rematch, train harder, fight smarter, and regain the title.

JAMES HAVDOUGLAS
St Louis, MO

DON'T MAKE ROY ANGRY

If Antonio Tarver is really trying to get under Roy Jones' skin, someone might want to remind him of what

happens to opponents who actually succeed in ticking Roy off. Just show him a tape of Jones' rematch with Montell Griffin!

JIM McGRADY
Aquebogue, NY

JUNIOR WELTERS RUN DEEP

The junior welterweight class is absolutely the most talent rich and deepest division in boxing. To start, Kostya Tszyu is a candidate for the pound-for-pound crown. And despite his quick knockout loss to Tszyu, Zab Judah is still a serious factor, as are Sharmba Mitchell, DeMarcus Corley, and Vivian Harris. And don't forget Arturo Gatti, who boxed beautifully against Micky Ward in the rematch, and is still the most exciting fighter in the world.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Kostya Tszyu is number one at junior welterweight, but he's far from the whole show writes Petteri Jeskanen.

There are also Europeans in the division that are not bad at all, guys such as Ricky Hatton, Oktay Urkal, Soulemane M'Baye, and Junior Witter, just to name a few.

The division elite are backed with hot prospects: Miguel Cotto, Ricky Williams, Francisco Bojado, Muhammad Abdullaev, and Dmitriy Salita. (I think Abdullaev is the best of the crop, and was really impressed by his demolition of Philip Holiday.) Then there are guys like Randall Bailey, Ben Tackie, and Diobelys Hurtado who can still give trouble to most of the guys in the division, despite recent losses. Jose Luis Castillo might make a move to junior welter soon, and Diego Corrales is making his comeback in the division. Both are serious threats to everybody, including Tszyu. Think of all the great matchups this division offers. It's good to be a boxing fan!

PETTERI JESKANEN
Helsinki, Finland

MORALES DESERVES COVER

Every month I go to my local convenience store anxious to pick up my brand new glossy copy of THE RING. But I have one complaint: Why hasn't Erik Morales graced the cover of your magazine?

I keep hearing about how great Marco Antonio Barrera is, and how if he's the number-one featherweight then "El Terrible" has to be number two, but why have I never seen Morales on the cover?

Morales is simply more exciting, more passionate, and a more devastating puncher than Barrera. And the defensive skills he showed against Paulie Ayala were awesome. In fact, I'll even go so as far as to say that Morales is *better* than Barrera.

You guys listed Morales as an overrated puncher in a recent issue, but I don't see Barrera knocking out everything in his path. Actually, Morales was a lot closer to knocking out Ayala than Barrera was to knocking out Johnny Tapia.

Morales should have fought Naseem Hamed when he had the chance a few years ago. Then even you guys would be singing his praises. It makes no difference, however. Erik is still undefeated in my eyes.

AARON BAYLEY
Toronto, Ontario

SUPER FLYS

Why aren't people talking about the golden era that we may be having at flyweight? While strawweight and junior flyweight dilute the official flyweight talent pool, everything under 112 pounds has to appeal to hardcore flyweight fans. With upcoming rubber matches between Bebis Mendoza and Rosendo Alvarez and Roberto Leyva and Miguel Barrera, a rumored Showtime date for Irene Pacheco and Eric Morel, and the rise of Brian Viloria, the littlest warriors are on fire right now. Throw in Jorge Arce and Pongsaklek Wongjongkam, and you have the makings of a great time for boxing fans. Let's start paying more attention to a group of guys that deserve it.

CLIFF ROLD
Sacramento, CA

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Are we entering a golden era for flyweights? Reader Cliff Rold certainly thinks so, especially if you factor in all the fighters in the junior fly and strawweight divisions. Among the best is WBA 112-pound titleholder Eric Morel, pictured en route to an 11th-round kayo of Denkaosaen Kaowichit.

LEWIS FLYING FROM BYRD

Lennox Lewis says, "I've fought every style in the division and cleaned it out!" That is simply not true. Looking at his record, I see no speedy, elusive southpaws. In fact, I may be wrong, but I don't see any southpaws at all on his professional ledger. The main thing that bothers me about this situation is the fact that boxing fans don't realize what's really going on.

Saying Chris Byrd is not a "worthy opponent" is a contradictory statement coming from a fighter whose own trainer, Emanuel Steward, has said what many boxers have said: "I don't want to fight Byrd if I don't have to." Now that the Tyson fight is history and Byrd has defeated Evander Holyfield in dominant fashion to obtain the vacant IBF title, I feel it's time for Lewis to give Byrd a chance.

LARRY KERN
Enterprise, MS ■

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

MAIN EVENTS NETWORKING

There hasn't been a live boxing match on network television since June 2000. That's almost three years. There hasn't been one on NBC since 1992. That's 11 years. But both streaks will come to an end on Saturday, May 3, when the new series promoted by Main Events and televised by both NBC and its Spanish-language sister network, Telemundo, kicks off.

The only dates that were firmly set as of press time are May 3, 10, and 17, but more dates extending through the summer and fall are expected to follow. Here's how the May shows will work: Telemundo will air an hour of live undercard boxing from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. EST, and NBC will take over with main event and co-feature action from 3:30 to 5 p.m. If the bouts end early, there will be more pre-taped undercard action ready to go. Two of the shows in May are positioned perfectly to garner excellent ratings, as the May 3 event will serve as the broadcast lead-in for The Kentucky Derby, and the May 17 show will directly precede The Preakness Stakes. The May 3 show will almost certainly be in Las Vegas, where it can tie in nicely with the **Oscar De La Hoya-Yory Boy Campas** pay-per-view that evening.

Juarez: Potential NBC headliner

"For the past decade," said Main Events CEO **Kathy Duva**, "getting boxing back on network television has been the sport's version of the search for the holy grail. There is an entire generation of great boxers waiting to be discovered by sports fans, which is why our innovative alliance with NBC and Telemundo is a milestone for boxing."

When word of the NBC-Main Events union began to spread last fall, junior middleweight star **Fernando Vargas** was a central figure in the discussions. But don't expect to see Vargas on NBC necessarily. Miller Lite, with which Vargas has an endorsement deal, was making a strong play to be the lead sponsor of the series at the time, but it turns out Budweiser will be the sponsor, and Vargas will probably continue to ply his trade on HBO.

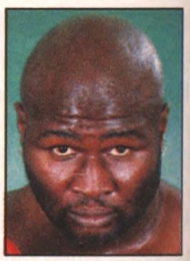
Instead, Main Events up-and-comers like **Kermit Cintron**, **Rocky Juarez**, **Francisco Bojado**, and **Nate Campbell** will most likely be featured on the first few shows. And fighters who aren't even associated with Main Events might get their chance as the series moves ahead.

"This is our series, and because it's our series, we're doing everything we can to make the series successful," said Main Events public relations director **Donald Tremblay**. "That means if we can make a fight involving fighters who aren't ours, and it's a quality fight, we will do it for the good of the series.

"Having this series is a wonderful opportunity for Main Events. **Dan Duva** always told Kathy the sport's survival depended on getting on network television. For Main Events, getting back on network television puts us in an excellent position for the present and the future."

And for boxing as a whole, it could turn out to have a more significant positive impact than anything that's happened to the sport in a long, long time.

LISTEN UP



Toney: Jirov fight back on tap

The undercard of that De La Hoya-Campas show on May 3 will feature **Erik Morales** vs. **Fernando "Bobby Boy" Velardez** in a mismatch almost as unappealing as the main event, and **Alexander Munoz** vs. **Martin Castillo** in a highly attractive battle of top young junior bantamweights. For Morales, the Velardez fight could be his last before moving up to 130 pounds ... June could be a huge month for British boxing: **Prince Naseem Hamed** claims he'll be returning June 7 in Manchester, England, against **Michael Brodie**, with HBO to televise; the long-discussed bout between junior welterweights **Ricky Hatton** and **Junior Witter** is expected to come off in June, providing both emerge victorious on their April 5 doubleheader; and world heavyweight champion **Lennox Lewis** has the date of June 21 set aside for his first title defense of the year ... Look for a July **Lou DiBella** card on HBO with three 10-round bouts featuring up-and-coming heavyweights. **DaVarryl Williamson** and **Derek Bryant** are expected to fill two of the slots ... The **Vassiliy Jirov-James Toney** cruiserweight battle has been rescheduled for April 26 on HBO *Boxing After Dark*. The co-feature will pit **Antonio Tarver** against **Montell Griffin** for a vacant 175-pound belt. ■

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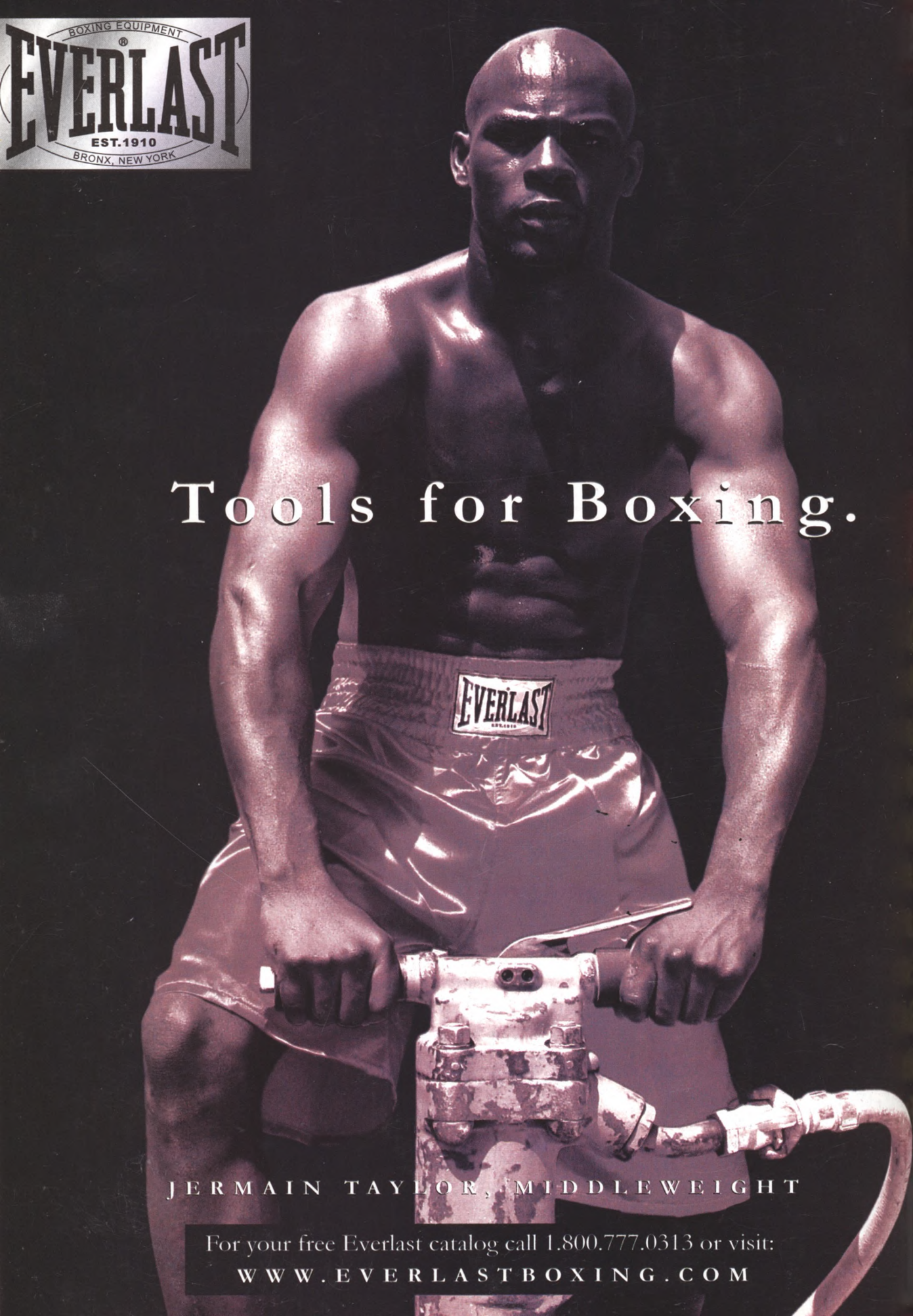
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